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THE VERNEUK PAN ADVENTURE.

BY DESMOND YOUNG.

Once upon a time (seven or eight years ago, or in some previous existence) I used to write occasionally for 'Blackwood's' about the salvage of ships. When, over-persuaded by the shipping slump, I gave up that queer but satisfying trade and drifted into journalism, I felt that the days of adventure, for me at least, were ended. And certainly journalism has not brought any experience quite so eventful as the struggle for the *Ulidia*, ashore at Soroka in the White Sea, or the voyage home in her, rudderless, without boats or hatches, half full of water and rolling her rails under, in tow of a single tug from Archangel to Tromso and the Tyne. Nor are newspaper days, strenuous enough at times, ever quite so strenuous as those twenty odd October days and nights we spent on board the *Blackhill*, desperately digging out iron ore by hand to lighten the ship, until the rising tide drove us up from the holds and covered the decks. Even the biggest of news 'scoops' does not carry quite the same thrill as that first stir of a stranded ship under one's feet and the cry "She's all alive—she's beginning to come astern, sir!" For to-day's newspaper is dead to-morrow; but there is a solid satisfaction about walking under a ship in the dry dock when one has had a hand in saving her from being battered into scrap by the sea on an outer reef. "A diamond bracelet lasts for ever"—there was that in it, too, of course, but it was not only the money that mattered. Still, journalism has its moments, and occasionally it takes one into queer enough places.

. . . . . .

It began when Tom Smith, the Motor Editor, walked into

my room one morning last November. "There might be something in this," he said. "This" was a half-sheet of blue ruled note-paper, with a few lines scribbled on it in pencil. It was, in fact, a letter from one Dr Marin of Brandvlei; and Brandvlei, as we discovered from the map, is a 'dorp' or village in the north-western district of the Cape Province, about 350 miles from Cape Town. Dr Marin, it appeared, had noticed a short Reuter message in the 'Cape Times' ("your valuable and widely read journal") describing Captain Malcolm Campbell's flight to the Sahara in search of a more suitable spot than Daytona Beach for the recovery of the world's speed record from Mr Ray Keech of America. "Why does not some one inspect Verneuk Pan near Brandvlei?" he asked. "You can get a stretch twenty miles long, ten miles broad, dead level, perfectly hard, and smooth."

At that time public excitement about Segrave and Campbell was still dormant. But one did not need much of a news sense to know that there might be a 'real story' in this. Of course, it was most unlikely that the place would be any good, but . . .

Scott, the assistant Motor Editor, left next morning by car with a staff photographer, who, as it happened, had photographed Campbell and Blue Bird at speed on Pendine Sands a year or two before for a London agency. With his first telegram—

> "Wonderful possibilities twenty miles of hard level surface have done seventy with hands off for miles on end"

a problem presented itself. Should we announce the discovery of 'the world's speedway' at once, or should we wait until we had a reply from Campbell and Segrave? If they showed no interest the announcement would fall flat, and we should look foolish. On the other hand, news notoriously does not improve with keeping; Dr Marin had probably been talking about his idea to all and sundry for days past; our evening competitor in Cape Town is alert, and has a good service of country correspondents; the story might very easily leak out in the interval. It was with some doubt and with considerable anxiety that we decided to await Scott's return, to get a full report from him, to cable a summary of it to Campbell and Segrave, and to publish nothing until we had their replies.

Scott and the photographer, in spite of a fifteen hours practically non-stop drive across the Karroo in a temperature of over 100, were full of optimism when they arrived back in the office.

The Pan ('Verneuk' is a rather vulgar Afrikaans word meaning to cheat, or humbug —an omen to which we did

not attach sufficient weight at the time) lies 50 miles north-east of Brandvlei, the nearest veld village; 80 miles from Zak River, the nearest railhead, and about 400 miles from Cape Town. Its dimensions have not even yet been accurately determined, but it is approximately 30 miles long and 20 miles broad. Scott himself gave a good first impression of it:—

"For two hours or so we travelled over the usual monotonous, bush-covered veld country, with here and there low flat-topped hills shimmering in the afternoon heat. As we approached the neighbourhood of the Pan the wind rose, and 'dust devils' which had been playing on the distant horizon disappeared, and a faint cloud of dust extending over a larger area took their place. Local farmers in the accompanying cars prophesied that one of the rare dust-storms found in that part of the country would soon be upon us.

"Climbing up over the rim of a small kopje, the road suddenly brought us in full view of our objective, Verneuk Pan, the great flat space in Bushmanland which one day may be famous. We stopped for a moment to look at it in an endeavour to gain some idea of its size, for the wind, which had been gradually increasing in intensity, was now bringing the dust clouds between us and the Pan, and visibility was poor.

"Away in the distance could be seen the faint outlines of hills on the far side of the Pan. To our right the dust obscured our vision, but even so, cliffs seemed to be silhouetted against the dust specks in the foreground, and between us and the cliffs lay a huge, flat, motionless sea—the surface of the Pan.

"We descended to the edge in the cars, and the dividing line between veld and Pan was as sharp and as definite as that between seashore and sea on a calm day. We drove out on the Pan for a mile or so, and the surface was hard and firm. Unfortunately the wind by this time was blowing fairly strongly, and the dust, although not thick, was sufficient to kill visibility beyond half a mile or so. It was therefore decided to postpone our tests until the following day (much to the disappointment of the people who had accompanied us), when we were assured that conditions would be perfect.

"As we stood out there on the floor of that great space and watched the sun sink, blood red, behind the clouds of dust, the feelings of the three of us who had travelled from Cape Town were the same. What a place in which to lose oneself! And we were informed that more than one traveller had indeed perished in endeavouring to cross this dry inland sea through the extraordinary mirages that occur.

"We spent the night at a

farm, and on the following morning we returned to make our tests. A farmer who lives four miles from the place, and who seems to know every corner of it, acted as our guide.

"The morning was perfect, and as we sped down from the veld on to the smooth surface we had our first experience of the Verneuk mirages. Right in front of us lay an almost rippleless ocean. Here and there, dotted about in limpid waters, lay little islands, with fairy trees waving on them. We swerved to our right—the sea was there! We wheeled to our left—the sea was there! In fact, we were doing the impossible—driving at 70 m.p.h. on a tiny island, yet never reaching the water.

"King Canute was not in it! He ordered the sea back, and nothing happened. We were pushing it back as fast as the sports model Buick could move. Never was a Pan more aptly named than Verneuk.

"But we soon became used to the mirages, and settled down to explore. For mile after mile we travelled, the steady hum of the Buick's engine being the only sound breaking the morning's stillness.

"We stopped the car and examined the surface. We found it to be hard, sun-dried, baked mud, which had developed thin fine cracks. At first sight one would imagine that this surface would be inclined to crumble, but in our actual tests it was found to remain firm and hard. An idea of its nature may be gained from the fact that the Buick was driven at 80 m.p.h. for over a mile with the hands off the steering wheel, with no dust and no swerve. And the Pan extends for twenty miles in length, with an average width of ten miles.

"We tried the Buick again and again, over new tracks and up and down our old tracks. At times our spoor was difficult to follow, so faint a trace did the tyres leave, but always the result was the same—dead level speeding.

"To say that the Pan is ideal for the whole distance, as it stands at the moment, is incorrect. Here and there on the surface peculiar black pebbles are found, somewhat resembling small lumps of coal. These, of course, for record-breaking purposes would have to be brushed aside, but as they are purely surface deposits there should be little difficulty, though in places they have formed into ridges. Also there is a type of thin bush growing here and there on the surface which would have to be removed for tremendous speeds. The Buick, however, went through the bushes at 50 m.p.h., and the passengers at the back hardly noticed that they were there. In any case they have no depth of root, and can be removed by hand.

"A curious point about the mirages is that a small black pebble, the size of an egg, when viewed from, say, a mile dis-

tant, looks like a large rock. Thin straggly grasses about ten inches high stretching in a line look like dense forests of bush. At first this is somewhat disconcerting when driving towards them at speed, but it is surprising how soon one becomes accustomed to the fact that what one sees does not really exist!

"Summing up our experiences, therefore, it seems to the mind of an average motorist that a wonderful stretch can be obtained at this spot at a moderate expenditure. There are undoubtedly material considerations of which the average man is ignorant in the terrific speeds reached by modern record-breakers. We in South Africa find it hard to estimate a speed of 3½ miles a minute, but in Verneuk Pan South Africa does undoubtedly possess a stretch of level country which, we should imagine, as a natural racing track would be hard to equal in any other part of the world."

There were indeed considerations of which we were ignorant, and during the next four months we met with so many difficulties and disappointments that we grew to detest the very name Verneuk and to doubt our own judgment, but in the end that first verdict was triumphantly confirmed.

On the strength of Scott's report we cabled to Captain Campbell and Major Segrave.

Anxiously we awaited their replies. The first message was from Campbell, who had only been back three weeks from the Sahara. It read:—

"Greatly appreciate cable. Please send details immediately."

Almost on top of it came one from Segrave:—

"Most interested in your cable regarding speed track. Please post me fullest available details at once also photographs if possible."

The first round was over. We had kept our story to ourselves, and on 23rd November we were able to come out with 'splash' headlines:—

CAMPBELL AND SEGRAVE
FOR THE CAPE?
IDEAL SPOT FOUND FOR
ATTEMPT ON WORLD'S RECORD.
SIXTEEN MILES CLEAR RUN.
BOTH EXPERTS KEENLY
INTERESTED IN VERNEUK PAN.
'CAPE TIMES' SURVEY.

The next day we published the views of 'Gerry' Bouwer, the South African racing motorist, famous for his 40-day dash from Cairo to the Cape. "My opinion," said Mr Bouwer, "is that Verneuk Pan will prove to be more suitable than either Daytona Beach or the Sahara." With an early appreciation of what the story was going to develop into, he added, "240 miles per hour on Verneuk Pan will be worth half a million sterling to South Africa in publicity."

By that week's mail Scott's full report and a number of enlargements of excellent photographs showing the surface of

the Pan in detail were sent to Campbell and Segrave.

Then came the second period of waiting. Both our men had risen to the bait, but would they after all prefer the familiar dangers and difficulties of Daytona Beach to a venture into the unknown? Campbell was our main hope, for, the pioneer of speed on sand and perhaps the most experienced of all racing motorists, he had already expressed his conviction that the day of beaches was done, and that for speeds of over two hundred miles an hour something safer must be found. On a beach the sand may vary from tide to tide, preparations have to be rushed, and if anything goes wrong the car is into the soft sand on one side or the sea on the other in a flash. Lockhart had already met his death at Daytona; Campbell himself had escaped by a miracle from a skid at 180 m.p.h. His daring flight to the Sahara, and the fact that he was reported to have sent representatives to Syria and Bolivia, indicated that he was serious in his search for an alternative to Daytona.

Meanwhile interest was growing rapidly in Cape Town, and still more rapidly in the 'dorps' in the Calvinia and Kenhardt districts, where droughts last for five years on end and life is almost incredibly uneventful. Further inspection of the future track confirmed Marin's and Scott's belief in it, and the three farmers who own the Pan agreed to cede all racing rights to the Royal Automobile Club for a term of ten years. Towards the middle of December we received Campbell's and Segrave's decisions. Segrave's preparations for Daytona beach were, he said, so far advanced that he found it impossible to change his original plans. Campbell had already despatched a representative to Cape Town, and if his report proved favourable, he intended to ship Blue Bird early in January. He added, in a cable to the 'Cape Times,' that one of his principal reasons for wishing to come to South Africa was his desire to promote the interests of British trade in the Union, and to his credit it must be said that during all his vicissitudes this was a consideration of which he never lost sight. It was refreshing in a defeatist age to meet any one who so whole-heartedly believed in the virtues of being British and buying British, and certainly Great Britain and British manufacturers have never had a better amateur ambassador.

With the arrival, on 31st December, six weeks after we had received Dr Marin's fateful letter, of Campbell's representative, things began to move. Within a week he had inspected the Pan with Bouwer, had a short stretch cleared as an experiment, surveyed it from the air, visited one or two rival Pans whose owners had awakened to their possibilities, and had cabled his report. He and

Bouwer were equally confident that a suitable track could easily be cleared in a few weeks with the aid of a sweeper, a roller, and a few hundred native 'boys,' and on 11th January the 'Cape Times' announced that Campbell was definitely leaving a week later.

His decision was a particularly daring one, for among the many unknown quantities was the effect of altitude (the Pan lies nearly 3000 feet above sea level) on carburation. Eleven per cent of power would definitely be lost—that could be calculated,—but would lessened wind resistance counterbalance this loss? It is now an open secret that the designers of the Napier engine were strongly opposed to the experiment, all previous records having been made at sea level.

South Africa has a sporting population, and within a few hours offers of help were pouring in from all sides. Cars, lorries, aeroplanes, a motor roller, a grader and tractor, quantities of petrol and oil, camp equipment, even a gramophone, were at once forthcoming. The railway administration reduced its rates on all material for the Pan, and the Royal Automobile Club of South Africa put up £500 in cash. A few days afterwards, at the suggestion of 'Ons Vaderland' (a Nationalist organ, which as a rule can hardly be regarded as pro-British), the Nationalist Government (also strongly suspect in many quarters since the flag dispute and the conclusion of the trade treaty with Germany) came forward with the offer of a similar amount.

There was already every prospect of a neck and neck race against time, for Segrave was leaving for Daytona on 31st January, and it was realised that the just completed Golden Arrow was probably a much faster car than the four-year-old Blue Bird. But, on the whole, the odds seemed slightly in favour of Campbell, for Daytona would only be available for the first week in March, by when it was hoped that Blue Bird and her driver would already have recovered the record. Interest increased from day to day, the papers were full of Campbell, and Verneuk Pan, unheard of a few months before, became the best known name in South Africa. Expeditions to see the attempt were planned, the railways administration discussed the possibility of running excursions (and feeding the excursionists in a desert), aeroplanes were booked up, a wireless station and a post office were installed in a tent on the Pan by the postal authorities, and newspaper representatives began to descend like vultures upon the scene of what, it was now realised, was destined to be a 'world story.' They were not the only vultures. Although the farmer owners had surrendered the racing rights over the Pan to the Royal Automobile Club, no attempt had been made to secure from them

their 'trading' rights, and the speculator, who abounds in South Africa, saw possibilities of profit in the erection of stands and tents, and in the sale of beer to thirsty spectators. He therefore secured concessions from the owners, and incidentally caused a good deal of trouble and ill-feeling by claiming the film rights which Campbell had reasonably regarded as his personal perquisite, and to which he looked to recoup himself for part of his very considerable expenditure in freight, passages for himself and his family, and the expense of bringing out, not only his mechanics, but also the Royal Automobile Club timing officials from England.

Meanwhile work was being pushed forward energetically on the track. But just about now Verneuk Pan began to give the first faint indications that there was 'something in a name,' and that it was not to be conquered so easily. Certain obstacles, such as the distance from railhead and the lack of accommodation, had been obvious from the start. But no one, not even the farmers who lived on the Pan, had supposed that there would be any difficulty in securing the necessary labour. If a few hundred 'boys' are wanted in South Africa at a few shillings a day, the South African assumes as a matter of course that they will be forthcoming. Unfortunately it appeared that 'boys' were scarce in this district. More unfortunately still, there was something in the Verneuk Pan air which did not seem to agree with those who were imported from elsewhere. Attempts to send up 'Cape coloured' labour from Cape Town ended in sickness or desertions. Instead of the four hundred men required, only about a hundred could be recruited. Furthermore, the preparation of the track was not so simple as it had appeared. The black pebbles referred to could indeed be 'brushed away' by hand—if there were hands enough to brush them! But the ridges of pebbles which extended across the track and in places rose to eighteen inches or more in height were found to have a hard core, being, in fact, not accumulations of loose stones thrown up by flood water, as had been supposed, but outcroppings from the shale bed which lies six inches or so under the baked mud surface of the Pan. They could be removed with the tractor and grader (they could hardly have been removed without them), but their removal disturbed the surface considerably and necessitated thorough rolling. Campbell's representative had been persuaded to abandon the track originally surveyed, and to choose another which he found marked out for him on his return from a hurried visit to Cape Town. Since it is difficult to keep one's bearings over a distance of fifteen miles with no landmarks, and since small obstacles can easily be skirted without direc-

tion being perceptibly altered, the new course no doubt seemed to him even more free from obstructions than the old. As a fact, the vital section, the measured mile and two miles on either side of it, was a mass of these shale reefs.

Snakes, scorpions, scarcity of water, intense heat, dysentery, breakdowns in transport, were thrown in as makeweights, and it soon became evident that the track could not be ready for Campbell on his arrival on 2nd February. However, seven miles had been cleared in about a fortnight with inadequate labour, the necessary gear was on the spot, more labour was promised, and there was still plenty of time before the first week in March. It might be a close-run thing, but Campbell should still be able to pull it off.

When the great man himself walked down the gangway of the *Carnarvon Castle* under the fire of a battery of press and 'movie' cameras, he made it clear that if there was to be any delay it would not be his fault. His first question was how soon he could get to the Pan, and the next afternoon we started by car for Calvinia, Brandvlei, and Verneuk. That non-stop drive through the night was something of a revelation to Campbell of how bad a comparatively good South African road can be, and made him realise (though it did not make him admit) that it is not merely prejudice which prevents the British car of medium power finding a market in the Union. For the first eighty miles, as far as Ceres, one passes over good roads and through magnificent mountain scenery. Then comes a stretch of 167 miles of deadly monotonous desert unrelieved by grass or tree. There are two or three farms between Ceres and Calvinia, but in half a dozen trips we never passed another car or saw any sign of life except a couple of waggons outspanned, and on one occasion some wild ostriches on the sky-line.

In Calvinia and Brandvlei we stopped for a few minutes. The population was awake and looking out for us. "The Captain" then and there laid the foundation of his remarkable and enduring popularity with the Dutch people of the north-west by his friendliness and courtesy to all those who wished to have a word with him. As we arrived on the Pan, the sun was just rising, and nothing more impressive could be imagined than the sight of that motionless sea of pale brown mud stretching flat to the horizon. Nor could any more perfect speedway be visualised by the layman than the portion of track already cleared. As the cars raced down the edge of it (Verneuk is the road-hog's paradise, and no car, lorry, or roller was ever driven over it at less than its maximum speed!), doing sixty with hardly a perceptible movement, and as one looked at the vast zone of

comparative safety on either side, there seemed no doubt that every optimistic opinion was justified.

Campbell, however, wasted very little time on general impressions. He stopped his car at the end of the course, and in a moment was on his hands and knees examining the surface. Without a word he stood up. "Just come over here a minute," he said to me, and knelt down again away from the others. "You see these little stones? Any one of these would cut through a racing tyre in an instant." The stones were minute particles of shale embedded in the mud. On the average they were smaller than the nail of a little finger, and left no mark whatever on an ordinary cover.

"Then you mean . . . ?" I asked.

"I'm afraid it's a complete wash-out. . . . Never mind, let's go and have some breakfast."

And he turned perfectly cheerfully to the others.

"Come on, you fellows," he said. "What about some breakfast?"

Campbell is a man of forty-five, and in small matters highly temperamental. He had been travelling all night over rough roads; he had staked his faith on Verneuk Pan; his car and mechanics were in Cape Town; he had already spent a great deal of money; it was too late to go to Daytona; the record on which he had set his heart would fall like a plum into the hands of Segrave—and he said not a word of reproach to those of us, his own man included, who had brought him out on what seemed that morning a fool's errand. "If you can . . ." Kipling's poem is too hackneyed to quote, but personally I felt that this was the sort of man for whom everything possible must be done. That determination did not enable me to swallow my breakfast, but Campbell enjoyed his, played the gramophone, took photographs of the native cook, examined scorpions, and seemed thoroughly contented.

Later on the two of us held a council of war. Campbell told me how the smallest seashells at Pendine had cut his racing covers (on which the rubber is only a millimetre thick) to ribbons. The small stones would be fatal. Very well, then, they must be picked up, by hand, over the whole twelve miles. The bumps left where the shale reefs had been removed were too severe—they would have to be levelled. The work at the present rate would clearly never be finished—it would have to be taken in hand on a different basis.

By one of those fortunate chances that occasionally come to even the unluckiest, and Campbell's bad luck is notorious, the landlord of the hotel at Calvinia (among our loyalest supporters throughout) mentioned to us the ability of Nesbitt, the provincial road engineer for the North-West

Cape, who looks after a district as big as Scotland. "Would we like to meet him?" We would. He came round, and Campbell and he formed an instantaneous liking for each other. "That is the man we want in charge of this job," said Campbell, and, with all the force of a single track mind, he set out to secure him. Twice more that week we went up to the Pan and back from Cape Town—800 miles over the sun-scorched Karroo,—the last time taking with us Nesbitt's chief, Beck, of the Provincial Roads Department. It is typical of South Africa that Beck raised no objection to motoring for two days and nights without sleep during his week-end off duty. (One can imagine a highly placed official in England confronted with the same invitation!) It is also typical of South Africa that within a few days Nesbitt had been lent by the Department, and was in complete charge of the operations without any question being raised as to how his salary was to be debited or who should look after the roads in the North-West Cape in his absence.

Nesbitt is a thoroughly competent and experienced man with the great advantage of local knowledge, and he soon had the work on a proper footing. But it now assumed much larger proportions than had ever been anticipated, for the necessity of removing even the smallest stone and the problem of the shale ridges led Nesbitt to decide on 'grouting' the centre 50 feet (the track was to be 120 feet wide) by removing the top surface and relaying with a mixture of original Pan clay and water over the whole length of 12 miles. More funds would clearly be necessary. Sir Ernest Oppenheimer came forward with a cheque for £500, the Cape Town and Johannesburg municipalities contributed £250 each, and the Government produced another £1000. Grouting meant rolling, however, and no suitable rollers could be obtained in the country. The Town Council of Germiston, near Johannesburg, offered theirs free of charge, and one of their engineers put up the cross country roller record by driving it 120 miles nonstop from the railhead to the Pan in twenty hours. Grouting also meant water, and the nearest water supply was five miles away at Mullers Farm. It had, therefore, to be carried, and was carried in relays of lorries until the water diviner and well-digger who had been engaged could strike a spring nearer to the course.

Then the spirit of Verneuk began to put in some more of its work. Campbell, going up to inspect the track by air as a passenger in a borrowed machine, crashed from a height of sixty feet or so at Calvinia and had a miraculous escape from death, the machine being completely wrecked. Fighting his way out of the front seat, with his nose nearly cut off

and his lips cut through, and suffering from a severe blow on the head from the petrol tank on the exact spot where a bonnet, flying off on Brooklands at 100 m.p.h. had struck him a year before, he proceeded to take photographs of the crash. He then wired to Cape Town for his own plane, Blue Bird, to be sent up to Calvinia to bring him home. Major Allister Miller, the leading South African airman, though he declared that nothing would have induced him to get into an aeroplane after such a crash as that sustained by Campbell, flew the machine to Calvinia and back, and made a perfect landing in one of the south-easterly gales for which Cape Town is famous. As we were pushing the machine into the hangar, a gust caught it and turned it upside down. It had, of course, to fall on Campbell and reopen his wounds. Two aeroplane accidents in one day seemed to suggest that the fates were against him. But he remained as determined as ever. "I am sure," he said, "that when Nesbitt has finished with the track it will be the most marvellous speedway in the world, and I still expect to attack the record on it within three weeks, when my wounds should be healed." This was already 26th February, and it was now almost inevitable that Segrave would make his attempt first. Worse was to follow. Except for occasional showers which dried immediately, no rain had fallen at the Pan for five years. But there was a local theory that rain could be expected during March in the year after leap year. This was the only occasion in our experience on which the local weather prophets were justified by results. On 5th March came a shower. On the evening of 6th March, to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning, a torrential downpour broke over the Pan. At the same time a tornado swept across the camp. The next was a hopeless dawn indeed. When day broke only two dripping tents remained upright, stores and bedding were sodden, the flimsy shelters of the labourers had vanished, and drenched through and miserable, they were standing ankle-deep in mud and water; lorries and cars were bogged, and the speedway itself was under water to a depth of several inches. To move across the surface of the Pan was out of the question. The sun-baked mud was converted into a slime in which it was almost impossible to stand, and between Verneuk and even the comparative civilisation of Brandvlei and Kenhardt the arid water-courses were now raging and impassable torrents. Only by wireless could touch be obtained with the outside world.

At an earlier stage of the proceedings we had prayed for rain, which, it was thought, would consolidate the surface; this was an answer to prayer with a vengeance!

Four days later, when work

was about to be resumed, came yet another downpour.

On the same evening Campbell and Mrs Campbell were dining with us in Cape Town. It was Campbell's forty-fifth birthday. We were just finishing dinner when the telephone bell rang. "Reuters here. We thought you might like to know that Segrave has broken the record at Daytona this afternoon." A few minutes later. "His average speed was 231·36."

Campbell had come out to beat a record of 207·5. He was confronted with one twenty-four miles an hour higher—and his track was still not ready.

That was another uncomfortable meal. But again Campbell's spirit, always at its best when things are really bad, carried him through. We sat and played some round game for trifling stakes with such cheerfulness as we could muster, and it was only when I saw him surreptitiously studying gear ratios and speeds on a slip of paper from his pocket-book and looked over his shoulder at them that I could see exactly how serious the news was for him. For at her maximum revolutions (3700) (and there was still that 11 per cent loss of power to be reckoned with) Blue Bird could theoretically do 231·8.

As always happens when things go wrong, there were many to say, "I told you so." Local newspaper critics, who had never shown any great enthusiasm for an idea not their own, began to speak of the Verneuk Pan adventure as "a costly farce," and as "this mad project." In England, experts who had never seen the Pan pronounced the surface as quite unsuitable for high speeds; a newspaper started an agitation to dissuade Campbell from making his attempt; he received encouraging inquiries as to what would become of his wife and children if he broke his neck; and a bishop preached a sermon on heroic methods of suicide. Funds, too, were very low, and the public was in such a state of perplexity owing to the delays and contradictory reports that it was clearly hopeless to think of making another appeal. Everything looked black indeed, and Campbell, whose expenses were mounting up week by week, might well have been excused for cutting his losses and going home. To any such suggestion he had only one reply—

"I have embarked on an enterprise from which there is no turning back."

For us, too, there could be no turning back. While the mechanics worked on Blue Bird at certain alterations to the gear-box and radiator which might enable them to squeeze an extra mile or two, while Nesbitt pushed ahead with the track, around which he had erected dykes in case of further floods, we devoted ourselves to the difficult and not very congenial task of keeping the job going financially. Every week it was a struggle to find

the wages, and more than once it seemed that we should have no alternative but to close down. Fortunately the Chrysler distributors came along with a cheque for £250, and did an even greater service by running a De Soto car for twenty-four hours at an average speed of 62·7 m.p.h. on an unprepared portion of the Pan. Clearly it could hardly be the ploughed field strewn with boulders which the pessimists were beginning to represent it. Public interest revived, further subscriptions were forthcoming; and when on 13th April the news was published that Nesbitt was now engaged on marking out, down the centre of the course, the 18-inch white line by which Campbell was to steer, the day for which we had all waited so long seemed at last within reach.

Blue Bird went back into her huge packing-case; Campbell and I set out to buy provisions for our camp; the public, which had begun to grow sceptical about the whole business, pricked up its ears again; and the newspaper offices hummed with renewed activity. The luck of the Pan had not yet run out, however. When we rang up the local agents to tell them the time at which we should want the big Thorneycroft six-wheel lorry which was to carry Blue Bird, we were confronted with the announcement that, not thinking that the track would be ready so soon, they had sold this lorry, the next shipment had been delayed, and there would be no Thorneycroft for nearly a fortnight. Meanwhile messages from the Pan indicated that in the opinion of the local weather prophets rain might be expected in about ten days' time. And rain, even if it dried off the Pan itself, would leave the roads impassable for weeks. The Thorneycroft which had been sold was quickly tracked down, but the owners had already cut about six feet off the length of it and fitted it with a 'bus body. So far as we could discover there was no other lorry in the country which could cope with Blue Bird's weight in the case of over five tons and length of twenty-five feet. Meanwhile Campbell received a cable to say that Mrs Campbell (who had returned to England to take the children to school) had been obliged to go into a nursing home for an operation, and a letter telling him that during the recent cold spell all the pipes in his house in Surrey had burst, and that the furnaces and electric lighting sets were ruined.

However, the mechanics were full of optimistic saws about silver linings and the darkest hour before the dawn, and justified their optimism by returning from a search of Cape Town with the news of an F.W.D. lorry in a motor body builder's workshop. We dashed off to inspect it, and decided that it might do, if we could build a suitable body

for it. The manager of the works, a racer of push-bicycles in the old days and something of a figure in the ring, assisted by the under-manager, a young French aviator who had flown throughout the war and then spent a year or so fighting for the Irish against the Black and Tans, had no doubt about the body. But there was a slight formality to be overcome. The lorry was brand-new, and belonged to Major Hadley of Johannesburg. After such a trip it would be decidedly second-hand. Would he be willing to lend it? A telegram brought a reply in a few hours telling us to take it by all means, and wishing Campbell good luck. It was pay day—Friday—and coloured workmen like to spend Friday night after their fashion—a fashion which does not improve their output on Saturday morning. The manager disappeared into the works, to announce a few minutes later that all the men had volunteered to carry on all night for "the Captain." By eight o'clock next morning the body was built, and by eleven o'clock the lorry was on one railway truck and Blue Bird in its box on another, consigned to the railhead at Zak River. How the box was to be got on to the lorry at a small siding where no appliances of any sort existed for lifting it was a problem that we left to the mechanics to worry out during their forty-eight hour train journey.

Our own small convoy started a few days afterwards from Cape Town, Campbell himself, with the advancement of British trade still in his mind, leading the procession in a 12-h.p. Austin saloon. The first forty miles of perfect tarmac served to demonstrate the superiority of British cars, nothing being able to pass the Austin — though jealous drivers of the large Chryslers in the rear insinuated that this was because Campbell consistently drove on the right-hand side of the road, only going over to the left when any one made an attempt to slip through on the blind side. Pausing only to beg some large posters of 'the Racing Romeo'—a motor racing super-film of speed and hairbreadth escapes, with which we surreptitiously decorated Campbell's tent later on—from the cinema at Paarl, and to discuss German beer with the German landlord of the Ceres Hotel, whose slogan, "O.K.—A1 at Lloyds—no arguments—why shouldn't we be happy?" is famous all over South Africa, we pushed across the Karroo to Calvinia. Here the whole town was waiting for us, and I learnt the news that the mechanics, having, with superhuman efforts got Blue Bird and her case on to the lorry, had found the springs of the latter exactly inverted, and the end of the box overlapping the chassis by about fifteen feet. They had, therefore, taken the responsibility of removing the precious Blue Bird from the box, and putting her on

the lorry under a tarpaulin, and had last been heard of making for the Pan over the awful roads from Zak River by night, and going well. In all the circumstances I thought that this was a message which need not be communicated to Campbell for the moment.

When, about 4 P.M. on the afternoon of Thursday, 18th April, we reached the Pan, the lorry had already arrived, and Blue Bird was being unloaded, a pit having been dug into which the lorry could back so as to bring the body to ground level and allow the car to be run off. (It may be mentioned that her clearance is exactly 3½ inches.) The mechanics were still full of enthusiasm in spite of having travelled, worked, and driven for several days and nights on end, and were much encouraged by the fact that a black cat had jumped on to the lorry and walked under Blue Bird, just as another of the tribe had done the year before under Campbell's car at Boulogne before he won the Grand Prix.

Our camp was at the beginning of the track, about six miles away from the main camp at 'Nesbitt's Island,' which overlooks the measured mile. It had a dyke and a barbed wire fence round it, and Blue Bird was housed in a canvas marquee, her mechanic sleeping alongside her, and Campbell having a small tent near by. From the camp a track, swept and garnished, ran three or four hundred yards to the starting-point. Two young apprentices from the electrical department of the railways who had sacrificed a fortnight's leave in February to work as volunteers on the track in the hope of seeing the attempt, and had now, at Campbell's request, and much to their own delight, been granted special leave, looked after the mess, concocted remarkable meals on a Primus, washed dishes (the last indignity for the young South African), and set us all a good example by their cheery willingness to do whatever was required of them. A visit to the post-office tent at the main camp produced bundles of telegrams wishing good luck to Blue Bird and her pilot, including one from the Governor-General, who had been the first to greet Campbell on his arrival in South Africa, and after we had 'shaken down,' we sat and read them and listened to the gramophone, while the Dutch farmers in their wide-brimmed hats stood round the fence to catch a glimpse of Blue Bird, and press photographers and reporters lurked in the offing intent on missing no movement on the part of Campbell and his men.

We had all been keyed up for weeks, our nerves and tempers on edge, but that night, in the clear mountain air, and the strange stillness that hangs over the Pan, with a full moon overhead, and the lights of the camping parties of visitors twinkling in the

distance, a feeling of peace and of relief came over us. Campbell and I walked out to the beginning of the track, and as we looked down the white line, stretching away out of sight in the moonlight, he told me of that philosophy of fatalism which enables him to get into his car perfectly coolly and to leave it at the end of a run (as I was to discover) without a tremor in his hand. Necessarily he lives on his nerves, but they have yet to fail him, and no matter how ill he may be feeling (at Verneuk Pan he was still suffering from violent headaches as a result of his aeroplane crash), he is a perfectly fit man immediately he is in the driving seat.

We turned in with the knowledge that he would make his trial run next day, and his real attempt on Saturday, when the timing gear would be installed.

That is to say, we were about to turn in. But about 9 o'clock a dejected lorry driver who had just arrived from Zak River with petrol and spares reported that when actually driving across the Pan he had remembered that he had left behind at Zak River Station two wooden wedges about six feet long. Were they important? The reply of the chief mechanic was a masterpiece of underexpression. "Well," he said, "we can't put the racing wheels on the car without them, so if you had thought to bring them it would have been just as well." Some one heaved a weary sigh. "That means 186 miles before daylight," he remarked. A move was made to the main camp (six miles—six minutes, the regulation Pan time) to see if anything could be done through the post office. But Brandvlei, the nearest office to Zak River, would not be open until 9 A.M. It was then that Dr Marin, the discoverer of the Pan, showed his heroism. He had been driving all day, but, "If Nesbitt will lend me his Buick," he said, "I'll be back by daylight." The trusty Buick, having spent three months in the open and done most of the work on the track, had no brakes and two of its front springs were gone, but as dawn broke over the camp and the first awakened mechanic put his head out of the marquee, Dr Marin, the Buick, and the wedges, were at the gate, having covered ninety miles at night over veld roads in three hours.

In the cool of the morning, having shaved from tea-cups and breakfasted off camp stretchers, we cleared our larder from the top of the big blue cases containing Blue Bird's spares, and the mechanics began their preparations. When the cases were opened the reason for much of Campbell's success became apparent. Every spare and accessory that could be needed was there, neatly arranged and docketed, and the cases themselves were designed to open out and form working benches. From two huge boxes came the racing tyres—black covers, with only

an eighth of an inch of rubber on the surface, to be pumped up by cylinders of compressed air with a pressure of 120 lb. to the square inch. From another came the two small engines for starting up the big Schneider Cup Napier engine of Blue Bird. The mechanics, in smart white overalls with a blue bird on the breast pocket, set about their work with the cheerful efficiency of their kind, each one getting on with his own job, and it was not long before the glittering silver discs were fitted to the wheels, the narrow graceful car was backed out of the marquee, the great engine coughed, spluttered, and then sprang into a steady low roar, and Villa, the chief mechanic, after listening attentively, pronounced Blue Bird ready for her first run in Africa.

Meanwhile the crowd increased round the wire fence, and although the optimistic speculators who had provided 80,000 bottles of beer and everything else in proportion, were destined to be disappointed, there were some hundreds of spectators on the Pan when Blue Bird was pushed down to the starting-point that afternoon.

There was a stiff wind blowing across the course, and we all urged upon Campbell that he should take no risks. "I'll be very careful," he said with a smile; "I'm only going out for a spin to see what the track is like." Blue Bird roared away into the distance, her wheels astride the white line, but so vast is the Pan that the impression of speed is diminished. Moreover, we all thought that not more than 140 or 150 m.p.h. would be attempted, and none of us had any means of estimating speeds greater than that. For half a mile away the car seemed to be moving quite slowly. Campbell only ran in one direction, and stopped after about eight miles. When we caught up and he announced that he had touched 215, we were amazed. When he added that he had never reached 200 so quickly, and when an inspection of the track showed that for the whole length of the measured mile the marks of the tyres never deviated by a hairsbreadth from the white line, which ran exactly midway between them, and that at no time had he shown the slightest sign of leaving the specially grouted 50 feet centre strip, still less of running off the 120 foot track which for the whole length of twelve miles had been cleared of even the smallest stones, rolled and swept, amazement gave place to enthusiasm, the greater because this trial had been made on smaller wheels than would be used for the actual attempt, and larger wheels would increase the gear ratio.

We were all optimists in Blue Bird camp that night, and even a 100 mile drive to Brandvlei and back to get my press messages off did not damp my own spirits, for I was

anxious to let South Africa know that, after all the disappointments and pessimistic rumours, the track had been vindicated.

Naturally all was not perfect, for there were a number of bumps, hardly perceptible at 80 m.p.h., which were only too noticeable at 215, and Campbell said that he had had a rough passage—apart from being nearly gassed with the fumes of the 'dope.' But we looked forward to the next day with confidence. As the sun came up, however, the wind increased with it, and we spent Saturday waiting in vain for a lull. On Sunday morning at dawn there was not a breath of wind, but again it rose with the sun and blew so strongly across the course that to run was out of the question. We mustered such patience as we could, but the situation was not improved when a local dignitary seized an opportunity of informing Campbell that rain was inevitable within a day or two, and that the Pan would probably remain flooded for some months. Lunch on Sunday was not a cheerful meal. Was the Pan after all to trick us at the last? Would Campbell have to go home with only a trial run to his credit, and a speed that rested on his bare assertion, since he had not been officially timed? It is hardly to be wondered at that when the wind moderated that afternoon and showed signs of dropping altogether, he should have decided to "have a cut at it," against his own better judgment, and against the advice of his mechanics. Blue Bird was pushed out of her tent again, and towed up to the far end so as to have the wind behind her, the lorry with spare wheels, second starting engine, mechanics, petrol, and water, made for the old starting-point, where wheels would have to be changed and the engine restarted within the half-hour allowed, and Campbell, in his overalls and racing cap, set out in the Austin.

This time I was determined that I would not miss the thrill that there must be in speed at close quarters. By a special dispensation (no one except officials and police was allowed within half a mile of the track) signed by Campbell, Mrs Bouwer and I were permitted to sit by the red banner marking the measured mile, on the very edge of the course itself, and within sixty feet of the white line.

For what seemed an eternity we waited without speaking, our glasses fixed on the course, though the ends of it were invisible. Nothing happened. Then I put my ear to the ground. There was a faint throbbing, like the sound of the sea in a shell. In the far distance showed a puff of smoke as though a lazy 'crump' had burst away over on the reserve line.

But Mrs Bouwer, who has been nearer than any other woman to Blue Bird and her driver at speed, shall describe

it: "To-day Captain Campbell promised me the thrill of my life," she wrote, "and kept his promise. It was the greatest experience I have ever known, and I cannot convey it except by saying that if you have ever stood on a railway platform and seen an express go by at sixty miles an hour, and can then conceive of that speed multiplied by four, you will have some idea of what it meant. I was not afraid, but I was awed, for Blue Bird seemed like some sinister monster from another world as she bore down on me. The Pan is so huge that she appeared quite small until she was almost on top of us, though I could see her plainly before she entered the mile at the other end. So accurate a course did Captain Campbell steer that the car seemed like some gigantic tape measure swallowing up the white line. That, indeed, is my strongest impression—her extraordinarily impersonal and Robot-like appearance as she roared past. Captain Campbell himself was invisible, and the car appeared to be controlled, not by a man inside her, but by some force far away—to have been fired down the course like a shell. The dust-cloud, like a fan, held its shape behind the car, towering over the tail of it as though it were being towed, and it was not until it had gone by that one heard the deep roar of the engine."

Another interminable wait until Blue Bird flashed by again, and then a wait, which seemed still longer, by the timekeeper's car, to know whether the record was broken, as every one in the crowd was confident that it was.

Actually Campbell had failed—but his failure was more gallant than many successes. For on the westward run his speed was 224·58, and on the eastward 212·5, an average of 218·5—eleven miles an hour above Ray Keech's record of 207, which he had come to South Africa to beat. Blue Bird had travelled ten miles an hour faster than ever before, in spite of the altitude and the bumps in the track. Perhaps she had travelled as fast as it was in her to travel—for she was nearly five years old on that April afternoon, and had been designed for a speed of 180.

Did Campbell know that? He would not admit it, and declared that he might just snatch those extra precious miles. But the daring plan which he evolved that night showed that he realised that only desperate measures would serve now. Abandoning the idea of going for the mile, he had the timing tapes so laid down as to give a measured kilometre at each end of a five-mile stretch, with a measured five kilometres in between. In other words, he proposed to gather speed for eight miles in each direction, and to leave himself only three miles at each end in which to pull up from his maximum. The five-

mile record, which stood at 140·61 m.p.h., he would take in his stride, the five-kilometre record of 202·72, made by Segrave at Daytona, must almost certainly be his if all went well. And the extra three miles of run might give him the kilometre, as valuable a record as the mile, at over 231·3. He would then have covered a recognised distance (which on the continent is the accepted standard for records) at a faster speed than any man had ever travelled before.

He explained the scheme to me, and I could not but admire the ingenuity as well as the daring of it. Then with a smile he produced a cable from the tyre manufacturers. It warned him that the tyres were intended only for the mile and not for any greater distance, and strongly urged him not to attempt five miles on them.

But neither tyre manufacturers nor any one else could dissuade him from his purpose. After a miserable day or two, during which violent dust-storms swept across the Pan, tearing down the tents and nearly carrying away the marquee covering Blue Bird, the new timing arrangements were ready. But again the wind baffled us. It would rise each morning with the sun, and continue to blow all day until the gathering darkness made it impossible to see the white line. Then the night would be calm and still.

The only chance seemed to be to snatch a few minutes after dawn and before sunrise. But the track had been sited from east to west, unlike the one which we originally selected, which ran diagonally to it. As the sun began to rise above the horizon, its blinding rays made it suicidal to think of running into it. And directly it was up, the wind would be tearing at the flags marking the course.

Eventually, on Thursday, 25th April, a week after the first trial, Campbell decided that he would wait no longer. An hour before daylight Blue Bird was at the starting-point with her mechanics alongside her. Having returned from a twenty-four mile drive up and down the track to see that flags and timing gear were in order, I woke Campbell, who was sleeping peacefully. "I don't like this early morning business," he said as he turned out into a cold dark dawn, but, as usual, the nearer he came to the moment, the more cheerful he grew.

Sitting quietly in the driving-seat, he waited until the light should be good enough. Then "Start her up," he said; "I can see"—and the engine would not start. And when it did start, and the car was pushed off, it stopped a hundred yards down the track, and the mechanics had to tear after her, pushing the starting engine on its trolley. But at last she was away—with nothing to spare, for the sky was already red,—and Campbell was com-

mitted to the most hazardous run in the history of motor racing.

How hazardous not even he knew. For when he was pushed off at the far end on the return journey, wheel spin stripped the tread from a tyre on the near driving wheel. "My God," said the tyre mechanic who was pushing at that side, "he's running on the canvas!" But it was too late to stop him, and run on the canvas he did for eleven miles, eight of them at well over 200 m.p.h.—conscious, with the racing motorist's fifth sense, that something was wrong, but never thinking of slowing up.

He captured the five-mile record at 212, 72 miles an hour in advance of the old figure, and put 15 miles an hour on Segrave's figures for the five kilometres. Most of us in South Africa thought, and think, that this was at least as good a feat as one mile at 231. But Campbell was not content — and he knew his public.

"There'll be no deputations to meet me when I get home," he said, "except deputations of creditors," and the event has shown that he was not far wrong.

No further attempt was possible, for there were no more tyres left, and we at least in our hearts were glad, for we felt that Campbell had given the spirit of Verneuk Pan enough chances, and that his car had shown the best that was in her.

But when all the others had gone, and Blue Bird herself was slowly making her way on her lorry across the empty expanse of the Pan, I drove by myself from end to end of the track along the white line, in the Buick, speculating on the future. Will that line gradually fade out, the track itself go back to the state in which we found it, and Verneuk Pan become hardly even a name? Or shall we see Campbell himself driving a new car, the Springbok, on South African soil, and setting up a new record by as wide a margin as did Segrave? Somehow I fancy that 'Onse man'—'Our man,' as the Dutch still call him in the backveld, will "have another cut at it."

THE PIPE PUSHERS.

BY WESTON MARTYR.

I.

THIS is the story of an obscure but potent branch of the British Army. It is, in fact, the saga of that immortal band, known to some irreverent souls as the Pipe Pushers. I propose to sing this saga myself, because it seems no one else will do so, and from what I know of Cornelius I am absolutely certain *he* won't. So the job is obviously up to the other Push Pipe officer, which is me. I wish to make it clear, though, from the very beginning, that my connection with the Pipe Pushers was due solely and entirely to the fact that it was my luck, or rather my fate, to be sharing a billet with Cornelius whilst the great pipe-pushing idea germinated, budded, and finally burst into flower in that distinguished officer's brain. I am anxious that all the credit and glory, and so on, should be heaped exclusively upon the head of Cornelius, where they unquestionably belong.

The Great Pipe Pushing Scheme originated at some time towards the end of 1916. I am sorry I cannot be more definite concerning this important date. My memory for dates is poor; but I do remember that the First Somme Battle was hardly over before I decided that life in the infantry was unsuitable for a person of my retiring temperament, and that shortly afterwards I managed to wangle a transfer to a Tunnelling Company, R.E. It was within a month of this jump of mine out of the frying-pan into the heart of the fire that I underwent a course of instruction at the Army Mining School; and as Cornelius was undergoing that same course of instruction when the divine afflatus affected him, the fact serves to establish the vital date as closely as I am able to fix it.

In fairness to that Army Mining School, I must give to it, as well as to Cornelius, a place in the roll of Fame, because it seems to me Cornelius' brain might not have blossomed as it did had its owner not undergone that unique and stimulating course of instruction. The School functioned near a peaceful village situated some twenty miles behind the line. The scholars slept in billets, messed, and conducted the theoretical portion of their studies, in two large, ugly, corrugated iron huts, and perpetrated the practical part of the School curriculum in the bowels of an adjacent field, where a maze of dark and narrow tunnels were driven

thirty feet below the roots of an unsuspecting crop of sugar-beet. The scholars deserve mention, too. There were about an hundred of them, and they were a queer lot. They were mature men, all of them—quite mature, I should say. The majority had been mining engineers or something or other to do with mines in civil life, and they had gathered at that Army School from all the ends of the earth. They were undoubtedly the toughest lot of men I have ever seen collected together in one place. There were gold men from the Rand, silver men from Australia, copper men from Nevada, tin men from Cornwall and the Straits, iron men from the States and Spain, soft coal men from the Midlands and North, and hard coal men from Wales. And between them they knew all there was to know about sin, wickedness, and mining for the metals, either precious or base.

The Officer Commanding the School was a little Sapper Major who knew nothing about commercial mining, and cared less; but he was a past master at his own job, which was fortunate, because I think if his pupils had become bored, they would, in the face of all the Army Council, have torn that school up by the roots. Instead, they were well content to sit at the little Major's feet and listen most attentively to his discourses on the best and quickest methods of undermining an alert and probably counter-mining foe and blowing him off the face of the earth. I wish to pay my tribute to the Major. He was a great man.

Cornelius was also a great man. He weighed two hundred and twenty pounds, at any rate, and he hailed from a portion of our far-flung Empire called, as nearly as I can remember it, Zwartruggensdamfontein. He was further remarkable in that he smoked perpetually a brand of tobacco which smelt like a fire in a fish manure factory, and exuded gouts of molten saltpetre that burnt little holes all down the front of Cornelius' uniform. Which was a pity, because Cornelius' uniform had apparently been fashioned by a Zwartruggensdamfontein craftsman, and no open-work embellishments were needed to heighten an effect already sufficiently striking. Cornelius' face well matched the rest of himself. It was big. It was, in fact, the largest front elevation I have ever observed on any human head, and all parts of it, except for those areas specifically exempted by Army Regulations, were covered with a matted growth of extremely ginger hair. In mentioning these matters I am not endeavouring to be funny at Cornelius' expense. Far from it. I am merely trying to show you what Cornelius looked like, so that you may understand how it was that I could sleep in the same room and work in company with Cornelius for nearly a month without suspecting that he was,

actually, a genius. It is easy to say, after the event, that I ought to have recognised, in that weird appearance and those strange clothes, two of the hall-marks of genius; but—well, I wish you had seen Cornelius yourself. You would then, like all the rest of us, most certainly have regarded him not as a genius but merely as a joke.

Cornelius has proved that he possessed a unique set of brains; but I am personally inclined to the opinion that his processes of cerebration were normally inclined to be a trifle sluggish. His was the type of mind which needs some external and abnormal stimulus before it proceeds to function, and it is my belief that the stimulus which in his case did the trick was the enforced state of intoxication into which he fell twice daily, in common with the rest of us, on each and every day that Army Mining Course lasted. I am aware that this is a grave charge to make against the authorities, but I repeat it. Twice each day during a period of six weeks, British officers, in numbers approximately one hundred, were forced to reduce themselves to a state of intoxication under orders imposed upon them by the Officer Commanding that Army School, such orders being, I imagine, well known to and approved by the high Army authorities. The state of affairs on which I now throw the light of publicity was doubtless very terrible; but, as one of the victims, I must in fairness add that it was a most pleasant state while it lasted.

The root cause of the whole business was the Major's determination that every officer passing through his School should acquire a thorough and practical knowledge of mine rescue work. Which, I am afraid, involves me in a boring explanation of what mine rescue work is. However, it must be done, so let me gild the pill with silver from the little Major's tongue. I should mention that the Major invariably commenced his lectures in true pedagogic style, but soon forgot himself and lapsed into his normal manner. His opening lecture, I remember, ran something like this: "Gentlemen (I include, erroneously, I fear, the large and red-haired officer in the rear row with the open mouth and the shut eyes. Oblige me, sir, with the appearance at least of your attention. In fact, dammit, WAKE UP). Er. Hum. When you return to the line, gentlemen, the duty will certainly devolve upon you sooner or later of—er—pooping off a mine under Fritz. That is, the Enemy. The product of an explosion is gas. Expansion. Pressure. You know all about that. One result—a hole in the ground and some Bosches squandered or given a rise in life. Another result—you fill your own galleries with gas and do yourself and your own men in. That is, you *will* if you do not listen

attentively to what I am going to say. I propose to tell you how you may preserve your lives—but I have no objection if the large and red-haired officer in the rear row goes to sleep again while I am doing so. This product of explosion —this gas, gentlemen—is odourless, invisible, and deadly. You may breathe it without being aware of the fact, after which you become quickly oblivious to all facts and presently die. That is, unless you are quickly removed into the fresh air. The man who does the removing will also be gassed unless he is carrying his own supply of fresh air with him. He can do this, thanks to the mine rescue apparatus which I will now proceed to describe. And I suggest that you give me your close attention while I am doing it, because when you return to the line you are the men who will have to do the rescuing, in view of the fact that you have been through this course. Now this is the apparatus. This cylinder contains oxygen under high pressure. You strap it on your back. This leather bag is connected to the cylinder by a pipe, with a valve in it which controls the flow of oxygen from the cylinder to the bag. You strap the bag on your chest. This tube and mouthpiece leading from the bag you fasten over your mouth. You screw up your nose in this clip, and breathe from the pipe through your mouth. You breathe in oxygen. You breathe out again into the bag. You then breathe in a mixture of oxygen and your own breath. You breathe it out again. You go on doing that. The bag swells up; but the pressure may be relieved by this adjustable exhaust valve. You have thus two valves to play with—the oxygen supply valve and the exhaust valve on the bag. If you open the oxygen valve too much, you blow up your bag and choke yourself. If you open your exhaust valve too much, you loose your air supply and smother yourself. To play on your valves properly and so attain the happy mean requires practice — lots of practice. Each officer present will therefore be provided with an opportunity of practising with a rescue set for one hour twice daily for the duration of the course. Those of you who may suffer from weak hearts will do well to report to the M.O. at the conclusion of this lecture."

Practical instruction in the use of the rescue apparatus was given us, in squads of twenty, by a Sergeant Harris, who must certainly be given a place in the pages of this history. The Sergeant, like the Major, knew his job. "Fall in, gentlemen," said he. "In two ranks, if *you* please. Not that this 'ere's a parade. It arn't. It's a lesson on 'ow to use rescue sets without doing yourselves in. And I may as well tell you gentlemen, right 'orf, I got *my* rank and job because my trade before the

war was *making* these rescue sets. I don't know overmuch about Army ways, and I'm telling you this because I 'ad a little trouble with my last lot of gentlemen, before they tumbled to it. I knew what I was talking about, even if I couldn't talk Army talk! *So* —you fall in two deep, because I wants you to work in pairs. Front an' rear rank men is mates, an' you'll work together and go through your tests together according."

Now, as the Fates would have it, Cornelius was my front rank man. Thus did Destiny mate us.

Sergeant Harris, thank heaven, believed in breaking in his pupils gently. He matured us slowly, allowing us to accustom ourselves to the multifarious horrors of those rescue sets step by step and one horror at a time. We passed our first hour with him breathing through our mouths with our noses screwed up in little vices. This is worse than it sounds. At the second lesson, in addition to wearing our nose-clips, we were gagged with a large and evil-tasting mouth-piece strapped firmly on to our heads. This is much worse than it sounds, and thus gagged one dribbles—surprisingly. The next step was to wear the complete outfit minus the nose-clip, which is not so bad—unless a desire to laugh suddenly overpowers one. This happened to me when I caught sight of Cornelius arrayed in his obscene panoply. The effect of a hearty burst of laughter produced exclusively through the nose is devastating. Also it hurts. The first hour spent gulping down oxygen heavily impregnated with the stench of warm damp leather was a period of pure and unadulterated horror, during which I, Cornelius, and the rest of the squad sweated cold sweats, felt death in dreadful form bearing down upon us, fell into a panic, and tore those stifling clips off our noses. Nor did it cheer us at all when the Sergeant improved the occasion by remarking: "Come, come, gentlemen. This won't do. Nose-clips on again, *if* you please. Supposin' you was down a gas-filled mine *now*. You'd *'av* to keep them clips on. So, if you take my tip, you'll get used to 'em—while you've got the chance."

It appears one can get used to anything if one has to. Within ten days of our first painful session with the Sergeant the twenty members of our squad could have been seen squatting in a row in a low, hot, narrow tunnel thirty feet under ground. We wore our rescue sets, and the tunnel was dark and filled with a particularly virulent brand of smoke, generated by the thoughtful Harris as a deterrent to the surreptitious slipping off of nose-clips. And the point to note is that we were filled, not with fear this time, but merely with boredom.

It was about this period that I began to notice the

effect produced on us by our daily doses of raw oxygen. High spirits became the rule, and appetites grew enormous. We were all, in fact, abnormally stimulated in mind and body by that oxygen to an extraordinary degree. Take my own case, for example. When I entered that Mining School, the fifth proposition in Euclid was a mystery I had never been able to master, and I had a vague idea that a theodolite was either an irregular Greek verb or a geological specimen. I believe I inclined to the latter hypothesis. When I passed out of the School, however, I was the proud possessor of a certificate in which the Major vouched for me as a "Mining Surveyor, First Class." There is thus no doubt of the power of oxygen to work miracles.

It took a long time before the effects of the gas appeared upon Cornelius, though. Cornelius was, shall I say, an exceedingly solid sort of person. It took a good deal to move him at the best of times, and the doses of oxygen imbibed twice daily by Cornelius had about as much effect on him as upon a lump of cold suet pudding. At the end of one hour spent in swallowing neat oxygen I have seen our squad of twenty grown men gambolling together like so many playful lambs. No one ever observed Cornelius gambolling, though. When he had to move, he walked—slowly, and each foot came down flat. His mind, I think, moved at a similar gait, and I suppose I know as much about Cornelius' mind as any one. Were we not mates, who worked together and slept in the same room? But even so, I do not pretend to know much about Cornelius. He seldom talked, and during the first month we were together he only really opened his mind to me once. I asked him one night, as we lay in our beds, what he thought of the Major's lecture that day on Mining Strategy and Tactics. Said he: "I do not listen to the man. When I was sixteen I learned to fight in Pieter de Wet's Commando; and my uncle, Jan Niekerk, who is shift boss at the Simmer and Jack Deep, *he* taught me about mining. So what is there that I can learn from the Major?"

It was the day after Cornelius had given me this little glimpse of himself that he received the overdose of oxygen which produced such extraordinary results. The programme provided for us that day was in the nature of a 'test,' devised by Sergeant Harris and the Major with diabolical ingenuity. Working in pairs and encased in our full mine rescue apparatus, we were to descend a 30-ft. shaft and proceed along a tunnel, where we would find a sack containing 120 lb. of sand and gravel. This sack represented a gassed man, and our task was to carry it out and bring it to the surface. To make the

conditions more realistic, the tunnel was filled with smoke, and partially blocked with some timber and sand-bags to represent a 'cave in.' When our turn came to go down, Cornelius went first and I followed closely. By means of my electric torch I could see Cornelius floundering along the tunnel ahead of me through the darkness and the smoke. I should mention that the dimensions of the tunnel and Cornelius were almost identical, both being about 6 feet high and 3 feet wide. Cornelius had evidently made up his mind to get an unpleasant job over and done with quickly. He went ahead fast, and presently came to the cave in, a barricade of sand-bags 4 feet high. He thrust both arms, his head, and his air-bag through the 2-feet hole and wriggled ahead a little. Then he stuck, because he is decidedly 'Dutch built,' and he had also his cylinder of oxygen strapped on behind him. I am not quite sure what happened next, and Cornelius refused to tell me; but, judging from the effects, I think I can reconstruct the business. Cornelius, unable to go on, decided to withdraw, but found he could not do so, because, while struggling in the hole, he had neglected to manipulate his exhaust valve, and his air-bag consequently filled itself with gas and swelled up like a balloon. Here, I regret to state, Cornelius got rattled. He should have opened the exhaust valve and released the pressure, but he opened the oxygen supply valve full on instead. This allowed oxygen at a pressure of something like 100 lb. per square inch to flow into his already over-inflated air-bag. There was one channel only by which the gas could escape, and that was through the mouthpiece and down Cornelius' gullet. Cornelius accordingly swelled up too. At the time I was unaware that Cornelius was being blown up like a motor tyre before my very eyes. It is true his legs thrashed wildly like a couple of mad flails; but I took all this activity merely as an indication of the strenuous efforts Cornelius was making to get ahead through the hole. The next thing I remember was a loud explosion. (Blanch not, gentle reader. It was not Cornelius, but only his air-bag). Then I was knocked down and trampled upon as Cornelius rushed madly past me back to the open air.

Had Cornelius been an ordinary man this overdose of oxygen ought to have killed him. Its first effect, however, was merely to make him very drunk indeed. He climbed up out of the shaft, tore off his rescue set, and kicked it savagely three times around the beetroot field, after which he fortunately collapsed, and we carried him off to bed.

When I went to bed myself that night Cornelius was fast asleep and snoring. In the middle of the night he woke

me up by throwing his boots at me. "Wake up!" said he. "I've thought of a thing, man, and I must tell you."

"Go to sleep," I said. "You're drunk, Cornelius, if you only knew it. The M.O. says you're suffering from oxygen intoxication, and you've got to keep quiet. If you do, he says you'll be all right in the morning. How do you feel?"

"I am well and I am not drunk," replied Cornelius. "How should I be drunk when I have drunk nothing at all? The M.O. is a fool. All you English are fools. Listen! When you attack a trench, what do you do? First you tell the enemy you are coming with much firing of guns, and then you attack in front. It was so you fought us in my first fight. I was on Talena Hill, and much afraid because I thought you would attack from the flanks and also from behind us. But no. You came on from the front like sheep. And like sheep we shot you. It was always so when I fought against you. And it is still so now I fight for you. Always the attack in front. You cannot learn. You are fools. I told this to my Colonel before we attacked at La Boiselle. At first he was astonished. Then he told me I was a fool."

"I bet he did," said I. "Who was he?"

"A stiff-necked man and brave, but foolish," went on Cornelius. "He laughed always when he looked at me, and he called me his old Oom Paul. And now he asked me how it was possible to turn the enemy's flanks when there were no flanks to turn. And I said that we also had no flanks, so that we should sit down and wait until the enemy became foolish and attacked *us* in front. This was truth, and he said it was so, but he said also he could not wait in France until he was old. And he said, 'We may be fools, Oom Paul, but remember, we did take Talena Hill and we did beat you in 1901.' And these being childish words, I did not talk with him any more then. On the next day we fought against the barbed wire and the machine-guns. We fought in the open, there being no cover in that place at all. On the next day we trekked back to rest, licking our wounds. And the Colonel came to me laughing, being pleased because the regiment had taken La Boiselle. 'You see, old Boer,' said he, 'it can be done, in spite of all.' And I replied, 'In truth, it is so. But—have you counted the cost?' Then we stood at the roadside and watched the battalion march past. And when the strength of one company passed us, no more men came. There were no more. *That* was the cost. And I said, 'La Boiselle was not worth it.'

"When the battalion was to go to the line again the Colonel called me before him. He held a paper in his hand. It was a call for officers for the

tunnelling companies, and the Colonel said that I, being a miner, should transfer myself to them. He said, 'You are too clever for the infantry, Oom Paul. You know too much.' And then he made a joke. 'You do not like frontal attacks,' he said, 'and you cannot go round any flanks in *this* war. But if you become a tunneller you can try going *underneath*.' Then he laughed, and I went away. But I have thought about his words. For it seemed to me that here *was* a way, and that the Colonel unknowingly spoke truth. To attack from beneath! A new way, and therefore good—if it could be done. I have thought about this for a long time, but never could I find an answer. But to-night, lying here in my bed, I found the answer. So I woke you to tell. Listen! It can be done with pipes!"

I remember getting up at this point and going over to Cornelius and putting my hand upon his forehead. I judged that Cornelius was delirious; but his head was cool, and he seemed quite calm. And he refused to stop talking. "You think I am mad," he said. "But I am not mad at all. Go back to bed, man, and listen. Then you also shall see. And listen well! For with my plan which I tell you now we shall win this war! We shall need pipes — 6-inch steel pipes, I think — screwing together in short lengths. We must dig pits, 10 feet or 12 feet deep perhaps, in our front trenches, and from these pits we can push the pipes with jacks—screw-jacks or hydraulic jacks—beneath the earth, under No Man's Land, until they lie beneath the Germans' trenches. Then we must clear the earth core from inside the pipes and charge them with explosives. Then, when all is prepared, we will explode the pipes—and the rest will be quite simple. To-morrow I will explain my plan to the Major, and here in the root field we will make an experiment. But already I know it is good. It cannot fail. *Do you not see?*"

I do not think Cornelius talked any more that night. I seem to remember that, having delivered himself of his great idea, he then fell fast asleep. But I did not sleep. I lay there thinking of Cornelius and his fantastic scheme. His words, of course, were the babblings of an idiot, and I wondered how long the effects of oxygen intoxication lasted, and felt glad that Cornelius had at any rate not been violent. I thought how queer it was to hear Cornelius, who so seldom said anything, go rambling on like that. He had been so ridiculously serious, too, with it all. "And the rest will be quite simple," he had said. "Do you not *see?*" I remember saying to myself, "I wonder what Cornelius does see? There's no doubt if only one *could* push a pipe filled with high explosive beneath No Man's Land, it would

give Fritz a nasty surprise. Let's see. The thing to do would be to push out our pipe from a spot that enfiladed his trench. You might get your pipe planted under a good length of his line that way. And when you exploded it you certainly ought to kill everyone there, and smash up all dug-outs and machine-gun emplacements. What a scheme for a raid! By Jove! If only you could do it, Cornelius would be right. The rest *would* be simple. You would merely have to walk across and collect the wrecked trench. The enemy on either flank might make it nasty for you while you were going over, of course, and there'd be the wire to get through. But—wait a bit! Why blow up the enemy's bit of trench only? Supposing that part of the pipe which passed under the wire and No Man's Land were filled with explosive, too. Then when you blew up Fritz, you'd blow a passage through his wire as well—*and*, by gum! you'd blow open a sort of communication trench at the same time, right from your own front trench to his. An attack under such conditions would be absolutely foolproof."

I think the above is roughly the manner in which the possibilities of Cornelius' scheme unfolded themselves in my mind. I remember I got quite excited at last, lying there in my bed, as the beauty of the thing dawned gradually upon me. And the more I thought about it, the better it got. I began to realise the many gorgeous ways in which Cornelius' push-pipes could be used. For instance, if no enfilading position was available, then converging lines of pipe could be pushed out from two separate positions in our trenches. The pipes would meet, and when exploded form a V-shaped salient with its point in the heart of the enemy's defences. And if two pipes were not enough to prepare the ground properly, then use more. Use a hundred! A thousand! Why not? And then I began to dream dreams and see wonderful visions. In fact, before the morning came I envisaged the whole of the British front, with its explosive pipes pushed out before it in a cunningly laid network. I saw, at the stroke of zero hour, the whole German front trench system blown wide open—all of it, from the Channel to Switzerland—a fitting prelude to the victorious conclusion of the war! This was such a splendid vision that I sprang out of bed and woke Cornelius.

"Do you remember what you were talking about last night," I said.

"Of course," replied Cornelius. "My pipes. And to-day I will tell the Major about them."

"Well, I've been thinking about your pipes all night," I said. "They'd be better than the tanks—if they'd work. But the trouble is, they won't. What makes you think you can push pipes underground

like that with a jack, you old jackass?"

And then Cornelius really did surprise me. "Because," said he, "I already have done it." And he then proceeded to relate how, once upon a time, he had taken a contract to cut a drive to connect the bottoms of two prospecting shafts. He had only a rough survey to go by, and was therefore not sure of the precise level and direction in which to make his drive. But it occurred to him that if he could force a small pipe through the intervening ground from one shaft to the other, and that if the end of the pipe eventually penetrated the second shaft, he would then be certain he was on the right line.

"I used," said Cornelius, "some 2-inch pipes. I drove them, one length at a time, through the solid schist with a 5-ton screw-jack. It went in as fast as we could work the jack. There was no trouble. In nine hours the pipe came through to the second shaft. Through 45 feet of schist we drove in, and I tell you, man, it was no trouble at all."

We told the Major all about it after breakfast, and the Major being, as I have said, a great man, grasped all the possibilities of the thing at once. "It sounds," said he, "like a good thing. But it's sure to be full of snags. In practice it probably won't work, but we'll certainly try it. If you pushed a pipe through solid schist, Potgieter, as you say you did, then we ought to be able to deal with the ground underlying the trenches. The fact that the stuff's mostly clay and chalk is clearly providential. I'm beginning to like this idea. In fact, I'll drive over myself to-day to see the C.R.E., and wheedle a jack and some pipe out of him. Then we'll try out the thing here."

When the Major returned that afternoon he had acquired a hydraulic jack, twelve pit props, and twenty 10-feet lengths of 6-inch steel pipe. And these things presently arriving in a lorry, the Pipe Pushers paraded for the first time in history, and dumped their material in the middle of the beetroot field. The personnel of the Pipe Pushers, be it noted, consisted of two officers, one N.C.O., and eight other ranks; in other words, of Cornelius, me, Sergeant Harris, and eight lusty ex-coal miners disguised as privates, R.E. From such small beginnings do great events spring.

We commenced operations forthwith. Sergeant Harris led off by winning three picks and two shovels from somewhere, and with these invaluable tools we dug a trench. Our trench was 15 feet long, 3 feet broad, and 12 feet deep, and we sunk it through 2 feet of top-soil into 10 feet of solid clay. We assumed that the eastern end of our trench was pointing at the enemy, and placed our jack 10 feet from the east face. We bedded it down firmly on the bottom, and chocked it

off with pit props wedged between the jack and some planks (won by Sergeant Harris) placed against the western face. We laid a plank on a clay foundation between the jack and the working face, and levelled the plank by means of a spirit-level, which Sergeant Harris found somewhere. This plank formed a bed and guide, and we placed upon it a 10-feet length of pipe, screwed up the jack, and forced the pipe forward, finding that it cut into the clay as if the stuff were so much cheese. The stroke or reach of the jack was 1 foot. It pushed the pipe forward 1 foot, when it reached its limit. We then screwed back the jack, placed a 1-foot length of pit-prop between it and the pipe, and screwed the jack up again, thus forcing the pipe another foot forward. We repeated this process, using a longer section of pit-prop each time, until the 10 feet of pipe were pushed into the clay. A second pipe was then screwed into the rear end of the first one, and the operation proceeded as before. While the pipes were being pushed forward we removed the core, or filling of clay which they contained, and in the course of our experiment we devised a variety of strange implements to enable us to do this. In this connection Sergeant Harris must again be mentioned in despatches. He, good man, lured into our trench the village blacksmith, who speedily became engrossed in the proceedings. Thanks to this worthy, the working equipment of the Pipe Pushers was supplemented by one giant chisel, one large auger-like affair, and a spiral wire-bristled brush which resembled a chimney-sweep's chief implement. We attacked the core with these weapons, screwing them on to lengths of 2-inch pipe and using the pipe as a handle. We battered at the core with the chisel, screwed and scraped out the fragments with the auger, and cleaned up with the brush. Sometimes, if we were lucky, the auger got a grip on a length of clay core and drew the whole thing out intact, exactly like pulling a long cork out of a bottle. As the push pipe lengthened, so did we extend the handle of our core-extracting tools, screwing on additional lengths of 2-inch pipes, precisely as a sweep does when cleaning a chimney.

Working like this we found we could push our pipe forward at an average rate of 5 feet per hour. In that first experiment we pushed 100 feet of pipe and cleared it of its core in twenty-six working hours, and the thing showed so much promise that even the Major began to get excited. Said he, "We'll need a lot of explosive to fill that pipe, and I don't quite see how I'm going to get hold of it. So I think I'll try and get the General to come and have a look at this. If we can impress him, the problem of supplies should be solved."

In due course the General turned up. I do not know if he was impressed. He watched us push 2 feet of pipe, and then he said "Humph" and went away. But if not impressed, he must, I think, have been at least intrigued, otherwise I am unable to account for the 500 lb. of ammonal which presently appeared. Ammonal, thank goodness, is not by nature one of those touchy and irritable explosives. You can drop the stuff and knock it about and treat it generally in a careless and offhand manner without causing it to react violently, as will, for instance, gun-cotton, which possesses a tricky and most artistic temperament. Our ammonal was packed in little canvas bags, and we found that by rolling the bags between two boards we could make them assume a sausage-like form ideal for stuffing into the push pipe. We fitted a wooden head to our 2-inch pipe, and using this as a ram-rod we forced our ammonal sausages one by one up the pipe as far as they would go. We filled about 50 feet of the pipe with the 500 lb. of ammonal, and in the last bag we placed a stick of blasting gelatine and a detonator attached to a length of insulated electric fuse. This fuse led back through the pipe into our trench, where it could be attached to an electric exploder when the time came to blow up the charge. Then we filled up the rest of the pipe with clay, tamped it in firmly, and rested from our labours. The first push pipe mine was laid and ready!

I regret to state that Cornelius, if left to himself, would probably have then ruined the whole business. "We will now blow," said he, "and show that it is good." Fortunately Sergeant Harris intervened. Said he, "Excuse *me*, sir, but Gor bless your 'eart, don't you go and *waste* it! If you blow it now, all we'll 'av to show is a hole in the ground—an' no one ain't going to get excited about that. You take my tip, sir, and wait an' get the General and all here. An' *then* fetch 'em with the fireworks." And the Major approving these words of wisdom, the Pipe Pushers perforce waited, itching with a great impatience, while the Major pulled the strings.

We waited for three days, but the audience which then assembled to witness our demonstration was, it seems to me, well worth waiting for. It consisted of one General Officer Commanding an Army Corps and his Staff, two Staff Colonels, one Staff Major, and two Staff Captains, all from G.H.Q. itself. "Gawd!" said Sergeant Harris as he observed the Major conducting these mighty personages towards us across the beet field. He dropped into the trench and I followed him, because I believe in taking cover when danger threatens, and that was my first experience of a mass attack by officers of the General Staff. Cornelius, however, was made

of sterner stuff. While I cowered at the bottom of the trench, Cornelius stood his ground, and gazed unwinkingly at that glittering array of scarlet and gold advancing upon him. He listened to the Major explaining the details of his Pipe Pushing Scheme; and when he was indicated as its author, he scratched his fiery head and favoured the assembly with a grin. "With my pipes we win the war," said he. The assembly then also grinned. To tell the truth, the assembly burst out laughing. Said Cornelius, "Now, General, if you permit, I will blow my pipe. Then you will see it is good, and I do not think you will laugh any more." He then jumped into the trench, and pressed down on the handle of the exploder.

I remember a mighty "THUMP," as if some angry giant had belaboured the quaking earth. I remember most of the trench falling in upon me, and I remember a glimpse of an atmosphere thick with flying beetroots, staff officers, and lumps of clay. And I shall not forget in a hurry a red and horrid fragment, raw and bleeding, that fell with a thud at my feet. I prepared to be sick, but recognised in time that the thing was merely a lump of lacerated beetroot, and scrambled out of the trench. I viewed the stricken field. In the middle of it gaped a crater 50 feet long and 10 feet deep. On its brink stood Cornelius, the Major, the Corps Commander, and Sergeant Harris. They looked pleased. Scattered about amongst the beetroots crouched the disconcerted members of the General's Staff. They bore all the hall-marks of having recently undergone a very harrowing experience, and they did not look pleased. At the far end of the field stood the School's one hundred mature and hard-bitten pupils. They seemed to me to rock strangely on their feet. They bent double, and their bodies heaved as if in pain, and they seemed to cling desperately to each other. It was some little while before I understood that they were laughing.

I approached the group at the crater's edge, and I am glad I got there in time to hear the General. Said he, "A fine show. I congratulate you. Devastating! Absolutely devastating. Pop off a thing like that under a trench full of Huns, and they'd vanish. Simply vanish. Just like those boys of mine did. *Did* you see 'em go? Blown clean out of the field! But I think I showed 'em the old man can still stand being shot over, what? Splendid! I'll devastate 'em. It's been a real good show. By Tophet! and I'm pleased with you. And I'll give you a chance to show what you can do in the line. I'll arrange it at once. And now let me go and tell my boys what I think of 'em. Rattled, they were! Properly rattled, by Gad! And by a barrage of bally beetroots!" Saying

which, the General patted Cornelius on the back and trotted off chuckling.

Said Cornelius, "Almachty! *There* is a fine man. I did not know. If we have more Generals like him we win this war after all. When they laughed at me I became angry—but I am glad I did not hurt *him*."

Four days after the successful demonstration of their powers the Pipe Pushers received orders to carry out their first offensive operation against the enemy. "The scheme seems to be," said the Major, "for you to prepare the ground for a raid the Nth Brigade are making. Zero hour is 2 A.M. next Monday, which gives you four days to get ready. They're sending one company over without any artillery preparation whatsoever. The General says he is relying on you to do all the preparation. He wants you to blow up 200 feet of the Bosche trench, and then the infantry go over and pick up the pieces. The General says he needs some prisoners for identification purposes; but I think his main idea is to give you a chance to show what you can do. I may tell you the General seems to be the only person at Headquarters with any faith at all in your pipes. Every one else laughed at the idea or condemned it outright. And I hear the infantry people are dead set against the Push Pipes, and have definitely asked to be allowed to make the raid on their own. So, you see, you've got to make good this time, or I doubt if you'll get another chance. I've been up the line myself, and examined the position, and I think you might, with luck, bring the thing off. The trenches there are no more than 100 feet apart, and you'll find there is one place from which you can enfilade about 200 feet of the enemy's firing trench. That gives 300 feet of pipe to push. The ground is soft clay over chalk. Practically made for the job, in fact, except that I noticed some flint boulders in it which may give you a little trouble perhaps. You will go up the line to-night, taking Sergeant Harris and your eight men, and I've arranged for a lorry to take you, together with 300 feet of pipe, the necessary timber, and a jack. You will report at Brigade Headquarters, and they will provide a guide and a carrying party. You'll be ready to start pushing by daylight to-morrow, I should think. To-morrow's Friday, and that gives you three clear days. The Tunnelling Company in the sector have been ordered to ration your men and provide all the ammonal you may need, and Battalion Headquarters will give you all details concerning the raid. You will, of course, co-operate closely with them throughout. Here are your orders and a plan of the front lines—and that seems to be about all I can do for you. So—good luck!"

Behold now the Pipe Pushers, marching on to war—or, rather, struggling up a narrow, slippery

communication trench in the black dark. Cornelius follows the guide and I follow Cornelius. And behind us trails a staggering line of men bearing heavy burdens and cursing. Sergeant Harris brings up the rear, because it is much simpler to drop in the mud such awkward impedimenta as pit-props, planks, and pipes than to insinuate them along a twisty over-crowded trench in the dark.

It seems to have been the fate of the Pipe Pushers to be unpopular from the first. At Brigade Headquarters we were treated with hauteur, derision, and scorn; our carrying party quite obviously hated us; the people who encountered our jack, pipes, &c., in the trench most violently disapproved of us; and when at last we arrived at the scene of our operations in the firing line we found we were far from being welcome. Said the Company Commander, "My God! What's all this? You can't dump that junk in my trench. I won't have it. Go away. Who *are* you, anyway?'

"The Push Pipe Party," replied Cornelius.

"Oh, you are, are you?" said the Company Commander. "Then you push off, my son. And take your damn pipes with you." He then flashed an electric torch on Cornelius' face, cried out in a loud voice, "Perishing Muckings! If it isn't old Uncle Oom Paul!" and collapsed upon the fire-step. "Oh, don't—*please* don't tell me," he went on, "that *you*'re the maniac they've sent to mess up our raid with a drain pipe!"

And then I heard Cornelius groaning in the dark. "Almachty!" he cried, "*it is my old regiment!*"

II.

Cornelius' old regiment boasts a list of battle honours as long as my leg. Its unofficial name is 'The Bull Heads,' because of the regimental tradition that the best way to defeat an enemy is to go for him bull-headed and toss him away. The Bull Heads' pet weapon is the bayonet; they regard barbed wire and bombs as unsporting, and look with scorn upon such accessories to infantry action as tanks and machine-guns. As this is a respectable family magazine, I cannot give you the Bull Heads' views on push pipes and Pipe Pushers, which is a pity, because the Bull Heads' views, though devastating, were diverting. And I know what I am talking about, because I had to sit and listen to the Bull Heads expressing themselves for twenty-three consecutive hours. During that time each single man in the battalion took trouble and pains to get himself to the fire-bay in which we were working in order to express himself on

us. 'C' Company's Sergeant-Major, I remember, was good; while No. 9 Platoon Commander was even better; and the R.S.M.'s discourse was, I think, a most masterly effort. But how—oh! *how* I wish I could give you the imperishable words let drop into the Pipe Pushers' trench by 'C' Company's Sanitary Orderly.

The unusual amount of traffic flowing into our trench inevitably attracted the enemy's attention, with the result that all that day we worked under a barrage of light shells and heavy trench-mortar bombs, which made life almost as uncomfortable as the hail of scorn and jeers directed upon us by the Bull Heads. But in spite of all this sound and fury the Pipe Pushers worked on. We arched our backs and pushed — furiously. For we were angry. We meant to show the Army (especially the Bull Heads) how to win the war. Our answer to the scoffers was, "You wait—and watch us." We meant to blow sky-high as many Germans as we could get at, not because we hated Germans particularly, but because by this time we hated those confounded Bull Heads, and we proposed to show them what the Pipe Pushers really could do. By 6 P.M. that night we had pushed 70 feet of pipe clear under No Man's Land, and we knew then that, unless some accident befell us, our 300 feet of loaded pipe would be ready and waiting well before zero hour.

Said Cornelius, "All goes well. Go you now to Battalion Headquarters and tell the Commanding Officer that our mine will be ready—on time."

"Hang it all, Cornelius," I said, "*you* go. You're the officer in charge, and you ought to go. I've heard what the battalion think of us, and I've had enough. I don't want to hear the Colonel."

"Yes," replied Cornelius, "I am in charge, and so I tell you to go. The Colonel he laughed at me always. Now he will laugh more, and I shall become angry. Go you, then. Give him greetings from his old Boer. Tell him I have not forgotten. There are no flanks in this war. No. In front, waiting for the Bull Heads, is the wire, thick as a forest of wachtenbitche thorn. But tell him I, Cornelius Potgieter, will clear the way for the Bull Heads. Tell him that. Go!"

I went; but I toned down Cornelius' message considerably, because I am frightened of all Colonels; and the Bull Heads' Colonel, when I crawled into his dug-out, regarded me as a M.F.H. might regard a vulpicide.

"I have to report, sir," I said, "that our work is going ahead more quickly than we estimated, so that the pipe-mine will be ready for firing before zero hour. That is, unless they dump something on top of our jack first, sir. They've been feeling for us with heavy Minnies all day."

"They have?" said the

Commanding Officer. "Ah! then perhaps there's a chance yet. Not that I wish you people any harm, of course; but the Corps have forced these confounded pipes of yours on to us, and, I feel it in my bones, they'll be the undoing of our raid yet. So you'll understand I'll be glad to see 'em put out of action. May heaven forbid that I should interfere with the G.O.C.'s orders; but what I say to you, young man, is this: We go over at 2 A.M. on Monday whether you explode your filthy pipes or whether you do not, and all you have to see to is that you don't blow any of my men up. It really is too bad of the General to saddle this—er—sewage scheme on to the Bull Heads."

"Very good, sir," said I. "But I hope you will think a little better of us when the raid's over. Captain Potgieter told me to report that he's going to blow open a communication trench right across No Man's Land, destroy the wire in front, and put out of action every man in the trench you are going to attack. Surely that ought to help a bit, sir?"

"Ah! Potgieter. Yes," said the Colonel, smiling grimly. "So they told me. I think I'll come up later and make sure that old Boer doesn't dish the lot of us with his slim tricks."

"Did you tell him?" asked Cornelius when I returned.

"I did," I said. "And he's coming up later to bite you. He regards us as a joke. They all do. And I gather from some pregnant remarks the Adjutant let fall that the Bull Heads intend to savage us if we dare to kill any of their Bosches. They say they're making this raid to get identifications—and they want live ones. As far as I can make out, their plan was to go over in the dark, wire-cutters in one hand and pick-handles in the other, collect all the Fritzes they could find, and then get back without making any noise, fuss, or bother. So they naturally think that our mine pooping off at the start of the proceedings is bound to jigger the whole show."

Cornelius gave vent to something that sounded like "Verflootundhochnamalia," which seemed to do him good. "The frontal attack as always," he then growled. "He will *not* learn, that man. But, this time, I will teach him."

The Pipe Pushers worked on. A little after dark we had some trouble. The pipe jammed, and it felt as if the end had run against some hard substance, probably one of those flint boulders the Major had warned us about. There being nothing to do except try and push past it, we fitted a lever to the handle of the jack, and all hands hove mightily upon it. The pipe buckled under the strain, twanged once like a banjo string, and suddenly moved forward. The Pipe Pushers breathed again. We had evidently forced our pipe

past the obstruction, and from then on for the rest of the night we had no more trouble, the pipe, in fact, after this incident, appearing to go forward more easily than ever.

By 4 A.M. we had pushed out 120 feet of pipe, and Sergeant Harris was hard at work removing the core. "Go easy," I warned him. "Remember you're working now right under the enemy's trench. You're only two or three feet beneath his trench boards. It won't do if he hears us."

"It won't!" said the voice of the Bull Heads' Commanding Officer from out of the darkness above us. "Although I think, from the way they're behaving, they know all about you already. I don't quite like all these lights they're sending up, and I mistrust this unusual trench-mortar activity. When I had the honour of being your Commanding Officer, Potgieter, I remember you used to lecture me on the superiority of Boer over British tactics. Well, if it's your idea to knock at the enemy's door before you attack him and tell him you're coming, you seem to have succeeded perfectly."

"Ah! You laugh at me still, Colonel," replied Cornelius. "But, wachtenbitche! Our people have a saying that he laughs the loudest who laughs last. So—we shall see!"

At this speech from Cornelius, visions of court-martials and shootings before dawn rose up before my horrified eyes; but the Bull Heads' Colonel must, I think, have had a soft place somewhere in his heart for old Cornelius, because all he said was this—

"*Our* people, too, have that same saying, old Boer. I think it is a very true one."

And with that the Bull Heads' Colonel climbed to the fire-step above us and looked out across the wire. For the dawn was breaking, and the Bull Heads, as their custom is, were standing-to. I climbed up also, to join that line of silent men who watched and waited so intently for what the new day might bring to them. The first faint gleamings of the light sifted across the eerie ground between the trenches, revealing nothing. Then suddenly the light grew—and we saw. We saw, reared in the middle of No Man's Land, an incredible pillar! A mystic column. A long, thin stalk that sprouted from the ground and rose up astoundingly 60 feet into the air. It drooped, as if weary, and it wavered drunkenly in the little dawn wind. And from its top appeared, twirling, the head of a chimney-sweep's broom.

I stumbled backwards at the sight, and fell. And in my ears arose, above the thunder of the guns, a crash and a rumble and an exceeding great roaring.

It was the Bull Heads—laughing!

KUH-I-SIM, THE TREASURE OF TURKESTAN.

BY P. S. NAZÁROFF.

MANY years ago, when still a student, I was engaged on a geological expedition in the Kirghiz Steppe, far from any dwelling or *aul* of the nomads. One late autumn day a snow-storm overtook me. The wind blew in gusts of great violence, and obliterated the path; the tired horses could hardly move their legs. Faced with the disagreeable prospect of passing the night in the steppe, and even, perhaps, of freezing to death, I asked my guide, a Kirghiz, "Which is the way now? Where can we find shelter?"

"If we push on, *Khudai khalasa*—that is, if God wills—towards evening we may reach Hazret, and there we shall find a comfortable shelter and a good reception. He has a big stone house; there is not another like it in the steppe, and Hazret is a very learned holy man. It will be nice for you to meet him," replied the man.

With great difficulty late at night we succeeded in reaching Hazret's home. His medium-sized stone house stood on the banks of a stream in a small copse, a great rarity in the treeless steppe.

I had already heard of this Hazret, a learned mulla who enjoyed an immense influence among the Kirghiz, who related many tales of his wisdom, learning, and sanctity, and so was very glad of an opportunity of meeting him.

I was still more glad when I went into a bright, clean, warm, nice room, the best in the house, which was placed at my disposal. In it there was no furniture at all; it was entirely hung with and spread with splendid Bukhará carpets, and the walls bulged with satin rugs and cushions. How good it was to stretch oneself after ten hours in the saddle, and after the cold of the blizzard to drink boiling hot tea and satisfy one's hunger with a splendid *pilau*, prepared as only they know how who have lived in Bukhará the Noble, 'Bukhará-i-Sherif.'

Hazret received me very kindly. "Live with me as long as you like," he said, "and as soon as the fine weather comes, then I will give you guides and fresh horses, and you can ride straight through to Djaman Kalá."

He was indeed an interesting man. A Kirghiz, son of a rich father, with a thirst for knowledge, he had gone as a young man to Bukhará, the seat of Mahommedan learning. There he had lived as a student in the *medress* or university for eighteen years, and then performed the *hajj* to Mecca,

travelling on horseback through Afghanistan and Persia. He was now living quietly among his own people, reaping the fruits of his wisdom. He produced on me the impression of a mediæval scholiast, crystallised in his opinions. It was curious to hear his account, for instance, of Bukhará, which he quite sincerely considered the most learned and enlightened city in the world.

"Everywhere light comes down from above, but in Bukhará it arises from the ground," he said, repeating the boastful assertion of the mullas of the city.

"In Holy Bukhará you may learn all knowledge, all sciences which are available for mankind," he said.

"And what did you learn in the *medress* at Bukhará?" I asked him.

"Moslem law, historical books, the philosophy of Aflatun, the works of Abu ibn Sina, geography, and the Arabic language in which all these things are set forth."

This was the scope of Moslem teaching, and I recognised in unfamiliar guise the names of Plato and of Avicenna, the famous geographer who lived in Khivá in the eleventh century and became an authority in mediæval Europe.

"Yes," he continued, "I will show you some of my books," and he brought and laid open on the carpet some old tomes in ancient leather bindings.

"These," he explained, "are all very old and expensive books. For this one alone I paid one hundred golden *till;* it is nearly a thousand years old, and by it I learnt geography."

I smiled to myself that he should pay such reverence, and such a price, about £30, for this treatise on geography, which, of course, did not include one hundredth part of the world as we know it. I took the book, and at once my glance fell on a large map showing the universe in the form of a flat circle surrounded by a broad belt of ocean. Northern Europe, the eastern half of Asia, and the greater part of Africa did not exist. The outlines of all continents and countries were distorted, and in the place of Great Britain were shown the Isles of the Djinns.

I could hardly repress my smiles at the sight of such a strange chart of the universe.

"Are Moscow and Saint Petersburg marked here?" I asked.

Hazret looked at the map and said, "No, these towns are not shown."

"Well," I could not help answering, "what is the use of a geography which does not show such important cities?"

"Here you will find shown rather Mahommedan countries," answered Hazret. "See, here is Bukhará and there is Samarkand."

"But where is Tashkend?" I asked.

"Tashkend is not there."

Then I could not help smiling.

"Well," I said, "what is the use of a treatise on geography like this? You cannot learn anything about the world from it; it is not worth anything!" I exclaimed with a smile.

Hazret thought for a moment. It seemed to me as though a shadow of doubt in his own learning began to dawn in his crystallised Moslem brain.

"Well, you see," he began, after a little consideration, "I do not treasure so much what exists on the world to-day that is new. I value and am interested only in what existed in days of old, at the time of the Prophet, whose name be blessed!"

"An answer worthy of a sincere orthodox fanatic," I thought to myself. In those days I was young and proud of my own knowledge won at the university. Many years later I understood my error and failure to appreciate the lore of this learned mulla and his love of the past.

Noticing some big town marked near Samarkand, I asked Hazret what it was.

"Oh, that is a large and very wealthy city, Tunkent, the capital of the Principality of Ilak; there is a great deal about it in this book," he said, brightening up.

"What does it say about Tunkent?" I asked, never having suspected the existence of such a town in Turkestan.

"See, here among these mountains," and he pointed with his finger to a spot on the map, "is the most famous and richest silver mine in the world; here they quarried pure silver like so much rock. This mine belonged to the principality of Ilak, and in Tunkent they minted money and made various precious objects and works of art which circulated through the entire world in exchange for different kinds of merchandise, which came into Tunkent from all lands. The town abounded in luxury, palaces, mosques, and for a long distance round was encircled by wonderful gardens."

"That must be what in old days they used to call Samarkand," I suggested.

"No, Tunkent was a totally different city and richer than Samarkand; in Samarkand there was only an emir, who governed all Khorassan," replied Hazret.

"Look," he continued, "there is an immense and terrible cavern, to the end of which no one has yet penetrated. There is an underground river, and across the river a bridge, and on the far side there is a terrible dragon which guards the uncountable treasure of gold and precious stones. It kills every one who ventures to go by."

"But that is only an old fable of ignorant folk in ancient days. You, as a learned man, you know yourself that nothing of the sort really exists," I tried to persuade him.

"No; this is truth," he answered. "I myself read in Mecca on the walls of the chief mosque an inscription about this same cavern, and pilgrims from Kokand told me that not long ago three Kirghiz who had returned from Mecca went into the cave to seek the treasure and never returned. Then their relatives collected, no less than forty men, all well armed, and went in to seek them, but they too never came back. After this the folk of the neighbourhood shut it up with stones, and covered the main entrance with earth. The learned Moslem Abu ibn Sina, who lived nine hundred years ago, describes this cave in detail in his book; it is called Kan-i-Gut—that is, the Mine of Destruction,—and he gives all instructions for prayers to read and for charms against the dragon should any one want to go in and get the treasure."

I was no longer listening. Fatigued with my adventures, I was dozing into a slumber, and do not know what more Hazret went on to say about the cave and the treasures of Turkestan.

II.

Many years after I was sorry that I had paid so little heed to those rare old books which Hazret showed me, that wise old connoisseur of the Arabic language and ancient Arabic literature. Fate willed that I should spend the best years of my life in Turkestan, seeking out its mineral wealth. I was the pioneer of the mining industry that was just beginning to bud.

The fame of Turkestan as a land rich in gold and other valuable and useful minerals was dissipated like smoke after the Russian occupation. The first prospecting expeditions by miners of the Urals and Siberia soon showed that the country was very poor. This opinion, too, was confirmed by the geological investigations of Professors Mushketoff and Romanovsky, and Turkestan for a long time ceased to attract attention in this respect.

My first researches into its geology, however, showed these opinions to be false. The more I investigated, the more and more convinced I became that Turkestan is no poorer than the Urals themselves in useful minerals, but, of course, the deposits do not occur near big towns or main highways of communication. Gold, silver, quicksilver, copper, lead and zinc, vanadium ores and wolfram, oil, coal and abundance of excellent iron ore, asbestos, and recently the discovery of radio-active ores and deposits of tin found by me would have enriched the country had circumstances been more favourable. Nature has given it, too, precious gem stones, abundance of marble, and lithographic stone.

Apart from the richness and variety of this mineral wealth, I was struck by the remains of ancient workings, with tools of bronze and stone, that I met at every step. There are also workings of the recent past by the khans of Kokand, but the greater part of the old mines, in places with immense workings, belong undoubtedly to a very remote historical period, the golden age of prosperity and culture of Turkestan.

In one remote spot in the mountains were great hills of slag, covered with grass and scrub, the remains of extensive buildings, old shafts and underground galleries, and immense excavations in the rock, all converted by the lapse of time and action of earthquakes into natural caverns, the walls of which were already covered with a coating of calcareous matter, and here and there from the roof there hung big stalactites. It required a very experienced eye and careful investigation to recognise the work of men's hands, and to see what ores had been worked and from which spots. It was remarkable, too, that in many such mines the chief seams and entrances of the adits and shafts had been artificially sealed, cemented over, and very carefully masked. To the eye of the layman they were simply caverns and natural grottoes. To this concealment nature had added screes, falls of rock, bushes, and trees.

A rich and highly developed mining industry had flourished in this place; the spot had once teemed with life, and been such a hive of industry as can be seen to-day in England and parts of Belgium. Then suddenly all life ceased; something happened and converted the flourishing industrial district into a desert.

Whatever it was it had happened not abruptly nor unexpectedly, and the miners had had time to make their preparations and conceal their wealth from other and hostile eyes until happier days should return, such as, for this unhappy country, never arrived.

The cavern called Kan-i-Gut, about which Hazret had talked so much, turned out to be well known and had been often explored. In the days of the khans they had sent condemned prisoners, promising them life and pardon if they made their way through to the end and returned to report what they had found in the recesses of the cavern, but not one had ever come back.

The Russians, too, had made several attempts to explore it, but each time some difficulty had stopped them.

That entrance which now opens into the cave leads into a huge open cavity, at the edge of underground abysses, into immense halls and chambers and deep wells, and finally to an underground river. The air in the cave is very pure, it is excellently ventilated, and there are no traces of dead bodies. Inside there is a spring

of splendid pure water, remains of old wooden bridges and timbering of wood that has not rotted, of the juniper known locally as 'argi' (*Juniperus pseudosabina*). But strong nerves are wanted to wander about the narrow and slippery paths over dark and sombre precipices, glittering evilly in the flickering light of a magnesium flare, or white glare of an acetylene lamp.

It was easy enough to see in the endless chambers and passages, to go through all of which would take days, an old mine. A part of these great cavities was made by nature and part by the long-continued work of men's hands through centuries. The regular methodical workings were there, the timbering, the deep shafts, with appliances for going down and coming up, though only a monkey could use them one would think; in places, over steep or vertical descents down marble cliffs, were artifically cut rings for the attachment of ropes.

The path was covered with the dust of ages; when this dust is removed a bright marble floor is revealed, polished by hundreds of bare feet that had walked over it in the course of centuries, smooth as the marble of ancient statues. There are astonishing, long, pipe-like holes, drilled in some unaccountable manner through the hard rock by the hand of man.

In the cavern there is a very rich silver-lead ore, galena, and gold ore. There is zinc ore, but if that was worked it was only for medicine.

After exploring the recesses of the cavern for two days I came to the conclusion, from various signs, that the air inside was rich in radio-active emanations. A scientific expedition which explored the cave before the Great War confirmed my opinion, and proved that the air inside is strongly radio-active. At the northern foothill of the mountains where Kan-i-Gut is situated, in a lovely spot where there is the tomb of a holy man, the Hodja-i-Tahraut, is a spring of beautiful water forming a green oasis among the barren mountains. This place is considered by the natives to be miracle-working, and they come in thousands to the tomb of the holy man to drink the wonder-working water, which showed upon investigation to be highly charged with radium emanation.

In the big mountain Kara Tau, above the tomb, there has been found pitchblende.

III.

Another strange mine interested me very much. I came across it by chance in a wild and remote part of the Turkestan mountains, in an isolated, shut in, desert valley. What struck me in this valley was the fact that, in spite of its

inaccessibility, everything in it gave the impression of a remote life long since passed, and activity of man, who left his traces everywhere on every side, but traces already planed over and masked by time and nature.

It was possible to go through the valley only on horseback, and that with difficulty, yet in it, from below to the top of a lofty mountain, there went in zigzags a broad carriage road, admirably laid out. Now it is all grown over with herbage and trees. This road leads to the ancient workings, which are very numerous and extensive: a part has collapsed, another is covered with falls of rock due to earthquakes. In the main workings, which look like an immense cathedral, the floor was covered with a thick layer of blue guano and covered with huge boulders that had fallen from the roof. But the galleries were entire, astonishing, broad, admirably cut out of the hard marble, and blind—that is, they led nowhere. All pointed to extensive workings through the course of centuries, all on an 'industrial capitalistic' scale.

After attentive examination of the falls, slag, and workings, I clearly saw that here silver had been worked and some other metals. But the veins themselves, the actual ore, and the ends of the galleries had been carefully sealed and artificially masked.

A layman would find it difficult to discover the spot where the main ore body occurs and where work might be resumed. For specialists I will say that this mine belongs to the so-called 'contact-metamorphic' type, such as occur also in the Banat of the Danube plains.

On examining this ancient mine, the question kept arising in my mind, Who worked these ores? To what historical period do they belong? What kind of people were they? And when was this extensive mining industry developed in this now forgotten and almost inaccessible valley, an industry that is now extinct, and whither did the output go?

Of course, it could not be the work of the present inhabitants of the country, the Sarts, with their very low level of technical knowledge and their indolence. And, too, their character and devotion to agriculture and stock-breeding are quite opposed to the idea of an intensive mining activity.

They remember former workings, but the winning of iron and copper in the days of the khans was of a very primitive character, and the natives discriminate these quite clearly from the ancient mines on a grand scale such as I have described. These, they invariably say, were worked by the Chinese, which is out of the question.

About the time of my tale there was found in Samarkand an ancient astronomical observatory, once the property

of Ulug Beg, grandson of Tamerlane, a famous learned man of the Middle Ages. A Table of the Stars drawn up by him has significance even to-day for astronomers. He is the author of that very true sentence often repeated in his writings: "The study of nature unites mankind, but philosophy and religion disunite." How truly the history of the twentieth century confirms his words of wisdom!

When looking at this observatory I met a Russian archæologist who had paid great attention to the history of Turkestan. He asked me if I had ever come across, in my geological expeditions in the mountains, any ancient silver mines.

"Why do you ask?" I asked in turn.

"You see," he explained, "we are naturally not interested in the actual mines, but in their position on the map, as according to ancient Arabian guide-books we might be able through these mines to determine the position of seven ancient cities of Turkestan which have now disappeared, and, above all, the situation of the town of Tunkent, capital of the principality of Ilak. We hope to find there a good deal of very interesting antiquarian remains of the pre-Mahommedan period of Turkestan and of the first centuries of the rule of the Arabs."

"This mine," he went on to say, "was called Kuh-i-Sim, which in Persian means the Mountain of Silver, or the Silver Peak. In its day it supplied the whole Moslem world with silver, and also Russia. In the Hermitage in St Petersburg there are quite a number of coins dug out of old stores in Central and even Northern Russia, with inscriptions that they were struck from silver from Kuh-i-Sim in the city of Tunkent."

I then remembered Hazret, and told him about this learned Kirghiz and his old books.

"Yes, indeed," said my friend, "those were certainly very rare books; a pity that you did not pay more attention to them and did not note the titles and names of the authors."

"Yes," he went on, "in Bukhará there are still a fair number of rare old books and manuscripts, but the local mullas value them very highly and conceal them from Europeans."

All this interested me so much that I resolved to take up the study of the history of Turkestan. In the Imperial Public Library of St Petersburg there was a splendid edition of De Gué, 'Bibliotheca Geographica Arabicorum,' but its Arabic text was a closed book to me. Luckily, such Arab writers and geographers as Idrissi, Istakhri, Ibn Khaukal, Ibn Khoroat Bek, and Abulfeda are available partly or entirely in translation into some European language. These writers opened my eyes about Turkestan, which I, like many others, thought was a 'new country,' only recently dis-

covered and opened up to culture and civilisation; that it had hitherto been only a sombre, strange, wild, Asiatic barbarism. It entered my head that the soil of Turkestan contained traces of a high civilisation when the nations of Europe were savages, and in the forests of Russia, in the expression of the old chronicler, men lived "in the manner of beasts."

Already in the seventh century, before the arrival of the Arab conquerors in Turkestan, the country was far ahead of the states of Europe in civilisation. The Arabs found the town of Samarkand rich, and in the highest degree prosperous. It had, for instance, a water supply, which through lead pipes gave the citizens a splendid drinking water from springs in the mountains; the beautiful and luxurious gardens and the streets of Samarkand were watered and irrigated by a special system of canals. I will remark in passing that neither Samarkand nor Tashkent, capital of Turkestan, has any water supply to-day, and the inhabitants are obliged to drink water from filthy wells or stinking gutters.

In the time of the summer heat the poor inhabitants of ancient Samarkand were supplied with ice free of payment, a luxury which is unknown to-day even in Europe!

The open places in the city were ornamented with huge bronze statues of horses, bulls, camels, dogs, &c. The chief religion at that time was the teaching of Zoroaster, Mazdeism, which inspired love and respect to animals, especially domestic, among which the dog held the first place, as the chief companion of man given him by Ahura Mazda for the protection of his family, home, and flocks, as is set forth in the hymn of the Zend Avesta composed in honour of the dog. Confirmation of the truth of these assertions is afforded by the bronze foot of a camel found in a water-channel at Dirhan, near Samarkand, and now preserved in the Tashkent Museum, unless it has been stolen by Bolshevik commissaries, as is their wont.

The town of Samarkand was full of temples, not only of the Zoroastrians but also of Buddhists, Manichæans, and Nestorian Christians, for at that time in Turkestan there was full religious liberty. The Arab conquerors of Turkestan were not destroyers; Islam was introduced gradually and its acceptance accompanied by sundry privileges, such as the giving of money payments for going to the mosques.

For this reason in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries the country reached a very high degree of prosperity and wealth, which it has never since been able to attain. This was the time when the dynasty of the Samanids, founded by Said Nazar, governed Turkestan. The Samanids were distinguished by their love of culture and education, and very

properly soon became emirs, quite independent of the caliphs of Baghdad. Their rule extended not only over the present area of Turkestan, but also over the northern portion of Persia and Afghanistan. All this district then bore the name of Khorassan. Commerce and industry flourished in the land.

In Samarkand excellent paper was made from the bark of the mulberry tree, and the glass made there was famed throughout the world. The Chinese emperor sent a special embassy to Samarkand to request the emir to send skilled craftsmen to China to make glass.

It was famous, too, for its silks. According to tradition a Chinese princess who married an emir of Samarkand secretly hid in her hair and brought with her some silkworm eggs to Samarkand, and thus started the silk industry in the country. The Chinese jealously guarded the secret of their silks, and the exportation of the eggs was an offence punished with death.

In the mountains life hummed. The smoke of the smelting furnaces mounted to the heavens; iron was poured forth, and copper and lead and silver; gold was won and quicksilver; there have been found remains of stone apparatus for the amalgamation of gold and silver; gems and precious stones were won.

Coal-mining began in this country four centuries earlier than in Europe.

All these descriptions of the old Arab geographers strike the reader by their circumstantial accuracy; they are useful even to-day as guides, for those who know how to read them. They say, for instance, writing about a certain colliery, that the ash from the coal was useful for bleaching tissues. This seems strange, but an analysis which I made of the ash showed that it contains zinc, so that evidently the ancients made zinc white out of it. The Arabs also praise the tin of Turkestan for its purity, although this metal was totally unknown in the country until I came across an easily smelting tin-ore. When I was being hunted by the 'rule of workmen and peasants,' and hid myself in the mountains, I stumbled on a deposit of topaz, sapphires, and rubies.

The commercial relations of Turkestan in those days were very wide. Its iron, famed for its purity, and its '*bulat*,' or steel, was sent as far as Damascus, and formed the blades that gave that ancient city its fame. Turkestan was always, and still is, famous for its melons. These, packed in ice in boxes of lead, were sent by courier express to the table of the caliphs of Baghdad, surely the first recorded instance of the export of perishable fruit in cold storage.

The Arab writers paid special attention to the silver mine mentioned above, Kuh-i-Sim, and to the town of Tunkent.

If we collate all data arising from Arabic sources, I am

convinced that the remarkable silver mine discovered by me is the famous Kuh-i-Sim. Down to the smallest detail everything points to it. Even the statement that not far from the mouth of the river of the silver mine there is an observatory corresponds to facts. I often used to visit this mine, and every time was more and more convinced of its identity and its remarkable richness. I always postponed a detailed investigation and survey till a more suitable occasion, which, alas! has never arisen.

This highly developed civilisation, this vigorous, industrial, and commercial life, these flourishing cities, and smiling gardens, all were swept away by a wave of barbarians, nomads who came out of the east, the wild hordes of Genghiz Khan. The infusion of Mongolian blood and the material ruin of the country led to the intellectual decay of the population. Only for a short time under Tamerlane and his immediate descendants did Turkestan attain any degree of civilisation again, but this also swiftly passed away.

Islam, once it became the dominant religion, turned a spiritual culture into savage fanaticism and hatred of unbelievers. This state of affairs lasted till the occupation of the country by Russia. It was on the very eve of this conquest that the two English travellers, Stoddard and Connolly, died a martyr's death in Bukhará by the orders of the Emir Muzaffar Eddin.

The rapidity of the spiritual decadence of the population is illustrated by the following incident. In Samarkand was found the original surveying instrument used for making plans by the old surveyors. Its design is so convenient and practical that it was seriously proposed to put it on the market as a modern pattern. It bore an inscription which is admirably preserved, to the effect that it was made in Samarkand by such and such a craftsman. But neither in Samarkand nor in Bukhará to-day can be found a single native, even among the learned mullas, who could explain the significance and use of this instrument.

IV.

I was also lucky enough to find the site of the ancient capital of the principality of Ilak, the city of Tunkent.

It was a wintry blizzard on the Kirghiz Steppe that drove me by sheer chance to make the acquaintance of Hazret, from whom I first heard of Tunkent. By an odd chance it was also through a snowstorm on the steppes of Turkestan that I fell upon the spot where once upon a time stood the proud and prosperous city.

It happened in the following manner.

After a very successful day's boar shooting I sent my man home with the half a dozen pig that I had killed, and proceeded to spend the night on the steppe in an *aul* of Kirghiz. Next morning before sunrise I was off again, calculating that a couple of hours' ride would bring me to a small caravanserai on the road where I could rest and break my fast. It was a cold morning and misty, a drizzle began which soon turned into a thick dry snow, and a strong cold wind sprang up from the north-east.

Riding against the wind was very difficult. The snow covered the ground, and the wind hardened it. The snow hurt my face, covered my eyes. My hands were numbed, but still my good horse pluckily struggled on, as it seemed to me, along the road.

Two hours passed thus; then three, four. But the familiar caravanserai did not appear in sight. The storm obscured vision, and I realised that I had strayed from the path and was riding in the wrong direction.

I peered round in the hope of finding some sort of shelter where I could stop and rest, get protection from the weather, and wait till the storm passed. I could not see more than ten or fifteen paces ahead. Everything was covered with a thick mantle of hard snow.

At length, unexpectedly there gradually appeared on the right the outline of something protuberant. I rode up to it, and found a piece of an old ruined wall forming an angle. This made a good shelter from the wind, and I made myself snug there with my horse, which was as glad as I to get into the lee from the blinding hurricane. Hooking the reins over my arm, I tucked myself right into the corner, rolled myself as tightly as possible in my coat, and fell asleep.

When I awoke, the storm had died down, and soon stopped altogether. The sky cleared, and I crept out of my shelter and climbed on to the wall to have a look round to try to pick up my direction.

What I saw caused me the greatest astonishment. For a long distance all round, as far as the eye could reach, there lay stretched out before me the *plan* of a great city, picked out in black lines against the white background, of natural size. Whole streets were clearly marked: the sites of houses, buildings, irrigation canals, cisterns, towers, walls, and the city walls. The dry snow driven by the wind had filled in all depressions in the soil, throwing out into relief the protuberances, and thus marking out the town, which had at some remote time been razed to the ground.

In the summer, when the steppe is covered with grass, and in winter when it is all hidden beneath a monotonous greyish yellow uniform, these small depressions and eleva-

tions are not apparent; but now, when a mantle of snow, a rare occurrence in this part of Turkestan, covered the ground and the wind had planed it off, the plan of the ancient city, long since destroyed, lost and forgotten, appeared once more, like a photographic negative. It was an interesting, rare, and instructive sight.

The next morning the sun would melt the snow, and the wonderful plan again disappear. How sorry I was not to have a camera with me, or that I had not with me the means of making a sketch plan of it on a plane table, which would have been better still.

A long time I spent riding round the streets and parks of this ephemeral Pompeii, trying to imagine what it all signified, the meaning of this or that right angle or curve. It was strange how the city gates were shown. It looked just as though the foundations for a new town had been laid out.

Towards night I came to a large river, where I bivouacked in a hamlet. Home again, I carefully measured out on the map the distances and directions I had ridden, and looked up my notes from the old Arab writers. I came to the undoubted conclusion that this was the spot where once upon a time stood the mysterious city of Tunkent, whose momentary plan sketched in snow I had thus strangely gazed upon.

It may be asked, what was done with these discoveries of mine, of Kuh-i-Sim and of Tunkent?

My notes, plans, and manuscripts were taken by the Bolsheviks with all the rest of my property, and burnt by these 'agents of scientific Socialism.' During the hard winter of 1918-19, when I was hiding in the native *auls*, the Bolsheviks for some days fired their stoves with my papers and documents containing the results of my life's work, geological surveys, and prospects in Turkestan.

Kuh-i-Sim, hidden from the savage Mongol hordes, is hidden too from the barbarians of the north, who have wiped out the mining industry which was just beginning to bud in Turkestan. A heavy earthquake, some time before the war, has covered up and completely hidden the approaches to the mine; now there is to be seen only a mass of tumbled rock and stone.

A SCOTS SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

Sir Walter Scott, usually indulgent in his judgments, is hard on the Scots mercenary—in search of fortune he changed his service as he would his shirt; he plundered the peasantry subjected to him by the fate of war; by adopting the trade, though distinguished for his bravery, he injured the national character; a tincture of learning, which most of them possessed, degenerated into pedantry. Dugald Dalgetty is cut to this pattern, based on the careers and personalities of Major-General Robert Monro and Sir James Turner. But while Monro was a dull dog and, like the immortal Dalgetty, a pedant, Scott handsomely exculpates Turner. He quotes a passage from his 'Memoirs,' and says it might have been written by Defoe.

Necessity and lack of opportunity at home sent the seventeenth century Scot to the German wars. Turner was an exception. He chose the life for the love of it. And youth and inexperience—he was not yet eighteen—can seldom have been put to a sterner test of endurance. His arrival on the scene of war in 1632 as ensign in Sir James Lumsden's regiment, levied for the service of Gustavus Adolphus, coincided with a decline in the fortune of the Swede, who a year later fell at Lutzen. For four months he lived on bread and water, "abundance of the last, but not of the first." It was winter, too, a severe one. The summer passed and another winter. He "suffered exceeding great want of both meat and clothes," lay constantly in the fields with little or no shelter, marched on foot, and, what seems to have weighed with him most, still drank water. Provisions were plentiful, money to purchase them wanting. Oft he thought wistfully of the wonted three meals a day in his father's manse at Dalkeith, and bed at a seasonable hour.

A "very handsome, witty, and discreet" young widow changed all that. Early in 1634 he chanced to be billeted at Oldendorp. The daughter of the house, of whom he became enamoured, had been married to a ritt-master of the emperors. She taught him High Dutch, and he inquired into the ways of the German officers. When shortly afterwards the regiment was reduced to two companies, and they were without pay, Turner had "learned so much cunning, and become so vigilant to lay hold on opportunities," that he wanted for nothing, "horses, clothes, meat, nor moneys."

A prospect of being selected by the Duke of Holstein to go to Persia to train the Persian infantry fired Turner's imagination and led his feet astray. Nothing came of it. "The

Persian expedition was blown up by the perfidy of the Duke's ambassador, who revealed the whole plot to the Turk; for which he had his head struck off at his return from Persia, having deserved a more ignominious death." Sir James Lumsden at Osnaburg meanwhile disposed of his place, which he looked upon as "no fair play," being contrary to promise. A young man's grievance. He had long overstayed his leave.

The Imperialists blockaded Osnaburg, and he was employed again. They were beaten off, but a force sent to turn out some Imperial regiments laying waste the territory of the Landgrave of Hesse turned tail. Although Turner's general had two men to their one he retreated, "masking his fear with reasons of state." Turner describes what he saw, and no war correspondent of to-day could better his description. "Old and young left their houses, by the loss of them and their goods to save their lives. Aged men and women, many above fourscore, most lame or blind, supported by their sons, daughters, and grandchildren, who themselves carried their little ones on their backs, was a ruthful object of pity to any tender-hearted Christian, and did show us with what dreadful countenance that bloody monster of war can appear in the world." Whatever the methods by which he maintained himself, these are not the words of a man who would plunder a peasantry in search of fortune. Two years diversified fighting that followed ended in a seventeen weeks' fever, and being discontented with his Colonel, a Courlander, he left the service.

Turner was now a Captain. Misled by a report that ten thousand men were to be recruited for the Prince Palatine, he went to Scotland seeking employment. There was no word of levies, but very great rumours of civil war. He stayed only a fortnight, and returning to Germany fell among thieves. Engaged to raise a company of Germans, he expended four hundred dollars of his own money, "so many leviers there were for several interests and so knavish the sojers." The Colonel of the regiment — "who passed then under the reputation of a brave and honest cavalier" —cheated him shamefully, and in default of satisfaction he set out for Sweden to lay his complaint before the Chancellor, accompanied by his old commander, Sir James Lumsden, and Colonel David Leslie. Six weeks produced nothing more than the offer of a letter to Field-Marshal Banier, who was "to cognosce on the difference." This Turner refused, and demanded his pass, having decided to go to Gottenburg, there to take ship for Scotland, where matters were now come to a head. They gave him as much money as he had spent —or was supposed to have spent—at the Court, with a

pass for free horses, meat and drink by the way, which, as he justly remarks, was a custom very grievous to the poor countrymen.

He did not find a ship at Gottenburg, but two were at Millstrand in Norway, three Swedish miles distant. One was English, belonging to Hull, the other a Dane bound for Leith. As to which to take he was Jack Easy. "I had swallowed without chewing, in Germany, a very dangerous maxim, which military men there too much follow; which was, that so we serve our master honestly, it is no matter what master we serve; so, without examination of the justice of the quarrel, or regard of my duty to either prince or country, I resolved to go with that ship I first encountered." He hired a boat in the evening, rowed all night, and about break of day came to Millstrand. The wind blew fair for both ships, so he was advised to go through the town to the shore, it being nearer, while the boat went about with his servant and coffer. Arriving just as the Englishman was hoisting sail, Turner beseeched him to stay till his servant and coffer came, but by no entreaty or prayer could he prevail, "for away he flew from me, as an arrow from a bow." This threw him with the Covenanters. The Dane lay a great way out from the shore waiting for a passenger to Edinburgh, an old man who had drunk so much the night before that he had overslept. Turner, with fresh men in his boat, made the ship, and the skipper, thinking the old man was come in his company, set sail.

On joining Leslie and the army of the Covenant at Newcastle, Turner met with a rebuff. In Germany he had accused the General's brother of treason. A cannon ball carried off the brother's head and closed the controversy, but the General bore Turner no goodwill. There was not a place vacant, he said. Turner's appointment to Lord Kirkcudbright's regiment as Major came from the Earl of Rothes. He did not take the Covenant, not through any scruples he had, only by some oversight; he would have "made no bones to take, swear, and sign it, and observe it too." Each month a truce was renewed between the Royalists and Covenanters. Then the army marched back into Scotland. All the regiments with the exception of three, which had not been to England, were disbanded, and in one of these Turner was made Major by its Colonel, Lord Sinclair, to the dissatisfaction of Leslie, newly created Earl of Leven "for his successful rebellion against the King."

Later in that same autumn of 1641 the Scots and English in Ireland were massacred, men, women, and children, and Scotland agreed to contribute ten thousand men, paid by England, for the suppression of

the rebellion. Turner crossed over with his regiment in the spring. It took the field under Major-General Robert Monro. Newry, which the rebels had seized, was taken, and the castle surrendered. Next day retribution was exacted. The prisoners, with many merchants and tradesmen of the town, were put to death, "some by shooting, some by hanging, and some by drowning." No undue care was exercised to exclude innocent persons. The soldiers, "seeing such pranks played by authority," ran upon one hundred and fifty women or thereby who had collected below the bridge. Turner was speaking to Monro at the time, and here we have the two prototypes of Dalgetty together. "Seeing afar off what a game these godless rogues intended to play, I got a-horseback and galloped to them with my pistol in my hand; but before I got at them they had dispatched about a dozen; the rest I saved." As he foresaw, these executions led to reprisals. A humane man and an enlightened soldier, Turner was much in advance of his time, and a contrast to most of his contemporaries. He denounces the slaughter of prisoners as "a thing inhuman and disavowable, for the cruelty of one enemy cannot excuse the inhumanity of another."

War between the King and Parliament broke out, and the position of the Scots army became difficult. The officers, not knowing their paymasters, formed a pact to serve those only who paid them; the Earl of Leven, Commander-in-Chief, "got himself an errand to Scotland, and so gave an everlasting adieu to Ireland." No reputations were made, but if we can trust Turner, the Earl of Leven kept his. "The most remarkable thing he did in the time of his stay was that he took £2500 sterling to himself which the Parliament of England had sent to the officers of his army for wagon money. And truly this Earl, who lived till he passed fourscore, was of so good a memory that he was never known to forget himself—nay, not in his extreme age." They did not love one another.

Turner "fingered no pay" the whole time he was in Ireland, except for three months. "Thus was I at toil and trouble enough for the space of two years, having got no more in the employment than what maintained me." Even so, he had not done badly, and we may be sure he did not drink water. He got there that which he valued more than worldly riches, his wife, Mary White.

Sinclair's regiment fell into such a state of want, "both for back and belly," that Turner was sent home with a pitiful tale. Leven disclosed the facts to the Committee of Estates, and the Committee, fearing the consequences to the country and the Covenant—chiefly to the Covenant—if the regiments were brought

back to Scotland—for they were all in equally bad condition—hesitated. They were still debating the matter when the officers, seeing no appearance of Turner's return, took the law into their own hands. Three out of the ten regiments, all there was transport for, and among them Sinclair's, landed at Portpatrick, which "alarmed the Committee at Edinburgh exceedingly."

There was no evading the new Solemn League and Covenant, and Turner's conscience began to trouble him. He thought it disloyal. Lord Sinclair, when sounded, thought the same; also the officers of Lord Lothian's regiment. They resolved to join Montrose. But not until the Committee of Estates paid up, and "a suit of clothes for every sojer." The Committee pressed the signing of the Covenant. They waived it with specious pretences, desired six weeks' time to advise with their consciences, a thing that had been granted to all other subjects, and hoped before the end of that time to be in a capacity to speak plainer language. It was not to be. A message despatched to Montrose inviting him to come to Stirling, where he would find the castle, town, and the two regiments for the King, failed to reach him; he was checked at Dumfries and returned to England.

Turner made a poor conspirator, which is all to his credit. The Committee of Estates suspected him, and he could not leave for fear of arrest. He had to take the Covenant. A pretence. Sinclair's regiment formed part of a force sent into England under the Earl of Callander, who had sworn to Turner by the most sacred oaths—"upon the Lord's day, too"—that he would not engage with the Covenanters. And here he was; and as bold as brass, giving him all imaginable assurances that he would act for the King, that the greater power he was invested with the more vigorously and vigilantly would he show himself active and loyal. Another pretence. Newcastle was taken by storm, and Sinclair's regiment, led by Turner, was the first to enter the town! But his newly awakened conscience would not allow him to share in the plunder, of which he "had not one penny worth."

In the summer of 1646 the King gave himself up to the Scots army at Newark. "Barbarously used he was, strong guards put upon him, and sentinels at all his windows, that he should cast over no letters." Turner speaks as an eye-witness, and he spoke with him. He assured the King that he was a prisoner, and prayed him to think of his escape, offering to aid him all he could, but their conversation was interrupted by Lieut.-General Leslie's command. He was not again permitted to speak with the King. Charles named him as one of five fitting to carry his commands

to Montrose. The Committee chose otherwise.

What he did next is surprising enough. The Committee and the General thought ill of him, and not knowing but he might have to fly beyond seas, he "sent and desired her who was to be my wife to be at the trouble to come to England to me." Upon his word, Mary White left "parents, her friends, country, all that was dear to her," which, he says, "both show her affection to me, and the trust she reposed in mine." They were married at Hexham on the 10th of November 1646. She found him in a sorry condition. This was the way of it. "Having drunk at one time too much at parting with a great person, riding home I met one Colonel Wren, between whom and me there was some animosity. He was afoot, and I lighted from my horse; drink prevailing over my reason, I forced him to draw his sword, which was two great handfuls longer than mine. This I perceiving, gripped his sword with my left hand, and thrust at him with my right; but he stepping back avoided it, and drew his sword away, which left so deep a wound between my thumb and foremost finger that I had almost lost the use of both unless I had been well cured. One other hurt I got in my left arm." Too sensible not to know his weakness, Turner adds, "This was one effect of drinking, which, I confess, beside the sin against God, hath brought me in many inconveniences." His blood had never been drawn before, though he had fought several private duels, and in battles, skirmishes, sieges, sallies beyond enumerating.

When in February 1647 the Scots traded the King for £200,000, "to the eternal disgrace of the whole nation," a curious situation arose. Lord Sinclair's battalion was ordered back to Ireland. Turner, sent over to arrange matters with Monro, found the coast guarded to bar their landing. He delivered a letter from the Scots Parliament, and harangued Monro and his officers in vain. Upon his return the Committee of Estates disbanded the regiment.

A few strongholds in the Western Isles still held out for the King. An army was sent to reduce them, of which Turner was appointed Adjutant-General. This did not disquiet his conscience. They had deserted Montrose. It was bloody and distasteful work. At Dunaverty Lieut.-General David Leslie would grant no terms, and the garrison on surrender was put to the sword, all except one young man whose life Turner begged. Several times Turner asked Leslie to spare the men's lives, and he was not unwilling; but Mr John Neave, appointed by the Commission of the Kirk as his chaplain and its representative, never ceased to urge the bloodshed, threatening him with the curses that befell Saul for sparing the Amalekites. There was

more savagery, but nothing so horrible. Turner's ameliorating influence told. The treaty for the capitulation of Dunneveg, arranged by him, is a sample. "Life was promised them; all the officers to go where they pleased; the sojers to be transported to France, and given to Henry Sinclair, my old Lieutenant-Colonel. The articles I saw couched in writing and signed by both Argyll and Leslie." In Mull, Maclaine lost his reputation, "if ever he was capable to have any." He not only gave up his strong castles to Leslie, and his eldest son as a hostage, but "which was unchristian baseness in the lowest degree," he delivered fourteen Irishmen to the Lieutenant-General, who immediately caused them to be hanged. Sir Donald Campbell, "a very old man, fleshed in blood from his very infancy," would have had the whole clan of Maclaine slain. The bloodthirsty ruffian was with difficulty suppressed, and Turner did not help, he was so enraged at Maclaine.

Argyll, the Kirk, and the Army on the one side, and the Duke of Hamilton on the other, were the opposing parties in Scotland. The Independents held England and the King. The Scottish Parliament, packed in the Hamilton interest, was in favour of raising a force for the release of the King's person; Argyll, the Kirk, and the Army were against it. Hamilton prevailed, was appointed General, and the Earl of Callander Lieut.-General. That weathercock had spun round. Turner cast in his lot with them, quit at last of the Covenant. The ministers of the West of Scotland preached disobedience to Parliament, and Turner with three troops of horse and a regiment of foot was sent to Glasgow to bring them to book. He achieved his purpose by firmness, moderation, and tact, but he incurred the undying enmity of the Kirk. The quartering of two or three troopers, or a half-dozen musketeers, he found, was enough to make the hardest headed Covenanter side with the Parliament. He came on the Friday, and next day requested Mr Dick and his brethren to say nothing in their pulpits that might give him just reason to interfere. "In the afternoon he transgressed all limits of modesty, and railed maliciously against both King and Parliament. This obliged me to command all my officers and sojers to go presently out of the church, because I neither could nor would suffer any under my command to be witness of a misdemeanour of that nature." On the Monday Mr Dick went to Edinburgh to complain, and sent one also to make his grievance to the Duke at Hamilton. The Duke approved of what Turner had done, and with reason; all was by his own order. "This was that great and well near inexpiable sin which I committed against the sacred sovereignty of the Kirk; for which all members

were so implacable and irreconcilable enemies to me afterward."

A premature move by the Royalists in the North of England upset the plans of the Scots. They penetrated into Lancashire, only to be driven back to Carlisle. The Scots hurriedly marched into England without artillery, with half their levies unraised, the other half raw and undisciplined. Lambert, the Parliamentary General, retired on their approach, and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, relieved from Carlisle, laid siege to the castle of Appleby. Turner, with two brigades, kept watch on Lambert, in case he should turn on them. It was while engaged in this not too onerous duty that he had a curious experience, the description of which Sir Walter Scott cites "as an example of how Captain Dalgetty might have recorded such an incident had he kept a journal; or, to give it a more just character, it is such as the genius of Defoe would have devised to give the minute and distinguishing features of truth to a fictitious narrative."

"Here I will set down an accident befell me; for though it was not a very strange one, yet it was a very odd one in all its parts. My two brigades lay in a village within half a mile of Appleby; my own quarter was in a gentleman's house, who was a Rittmaster, and at that time with Sir Marmaduke; his wife kept her chamber ready to be brought to bed. The castle being over, and Lambert far enough, I resolved to go to bed every night, having had fatigue enough before. The first night I slept well; and rising next morning, I missed one linen stocking, one half silk one and one boothose, the accoutrement under a boot for one leg; neither could they be found for any search. Being provided of more of the same kind, I made myself ready, and rode to the headquarters. At my return, I could hear no news of my stockings. That night I went to bed, and next morning found myself just so used; missing the three stockings for one leg only, the other three being left entire as they were the day before. A narrower search than the first was made, but without success. I had yet in reserve one pair of whole stockings, and a pair of boothose greater than the former. These I put on my legs. The third morning I found the same usage, the stockings for one leg only left me. It was time for me then, and my servants too, to imagine it must be rats that had shared my stockings so equally with me; and this the mistress of the house knew well enough, but would not tell it me. The room, which was a low parlour, being well searched with candles, the top of my great boothose was found at a hole, in which they had drawn all the rest. I went abroad, and ordered the boards to be raised, to see how the rats had disposed of

my moveables. The mistress sent a servant of her own to be present at this action, which she knew concerned her. One board being but a little opened, a little boy of mine thrust in his hand, and fetched with him four and twenty old pieces of gold, and one angel. The servant of the house affirmed it appertained to his mistress. The boy bringing the gold to me, I went immediately to the gentlewoman's chamber and told her it was probable Lambert having quartered in that house, as indeed he had, some of his servants might have hid that gold; and if so, it was lawfully mine; but if she could make it appear it belonged to her, I should immediately give it her. The poor gentlewoman told me with many tears, that her husband being none of the frugalist men (and indeed he was a spendthrift) she had hid that gold without his knowledge, to make use of it as she had occasion, especially when she lay in; and conjured me, as I loved the King (for whom her husband and she had suffered much), not to detain her gold. She said, if there was either more or less than four and twenty whole pieces, and two half ones, it should be none of hers, and that they were put by her in a red velvet purse. After I had given her assurance of her gold, a new search is made, the other angel is found, the velvet purse all gnawed in bits, as my stockings were, and the gold instantly restored to the gentlewoman. I have often heard that the eating or gnawing of clothes by rats is ominous, and portends some mischance to fall on those to whom the clothes belong. I thank God I was never addicted to such divinations, or heeded them. It is true that more misfortunes than one fell on me shortly after; but I am sure I could have better foreseen them myself than rats or any such vermin, and yet I did not."

As Turner sadly records, to relieve Langdale at Carlisle brought them out of the road, and they never came in the right way again. Before they knew it, Cromwell attacked. The Duke was no match for him, and Callander a blunderer. Cromwell's veterans pressed hard on their heels, and discipline, of which they never had much, gave way. In the streets of Wigan, a regiment of their own horse, in a panic, was about to ride down Turner's pikemen, when he got them to stop and commanded his pikes to open. But the panic spread to the pikemen. Two of them ran at him. One of the pikes, which was intended for his belly, he gripped with his left hand, the other he received in his right thigh. All the horse rode through the whole of the foot. It was a debacle. The Duke, dismayed, ordered General Baillie and the foot to give themselves up. Turner had his wound dressed by a surgeon and carried on.

A fatality seemed to pursue

them, born of their leaders' irresolution and dissensions. The troopers mutinied, and kept the Duke and Callander and their officers under strong guards for a night. They were brought back to their duty by Turner, but shortly afterwards Callander went away. By no entreaty of the Duke or mediation of the officers would he stay. Turner dealt particularly with him, and seems to regret his good fortune in getting safely to Holland in disguise.

The Duke, deserted and surrounded, capitulated to Lambert. The terms were good, but ill observed. Turner was taken to Hull under strong escort, courteously received by the Governor, Colonel Robert Overton, and lodged in the town, until the long arm of Kirk and Covenant reached him. Then he was put into the common jail, and very strictly guarded by no fewer than five sentries. A worse fate would have befallen him only for Overton. Cromwell's instructions were that he was to be kept in irons. These Overton ignored, even allowing a measure of liberty with surveillance, and assured him that any rough usage he received, or might receive, came out of Scotland. In return Turner gave his word of honour not to escape. He "deceived the longness of the time with reading and writing." The Governor permitted him not only to go to church, but to walk sometimes on the town walls, with one of his marshals and two musketeers. At night the turnkey locked him into his "indifferent good chamber." He paid a shilling for his bed, a shilling for coals, a groat for candles, all *per diem*, and eighteenpence for a meal. An honest Royalist, Mr Key, whom he might not speak to but before one of the keepers, supplied him with money the whole time of his fourteen months' imprisonment. It was repaid by David Wilkie, a merchant of Edinburgh, "they two having been well acquainted together in Spain." If his thoughts were sad, as when he heard of the execution, first of the King, and then of the Duke of Hamilton, he consoled himself with the reflection that after a great storm comes calm.

His devoted wife came from Scotland, a trying journey in December. She had obtained from Lambert an order for Overton to send him to Newcastle. This it was hoped would be, as in the case of others, a step to freedom. Overton's orders, however, were from Cromwell, and of a later date. Lambert was now at Pomfret. She went to Pomfret, another three-score miles over bad roads in vile weather, only to find him powerless to override his superior. Disappointed and much against her will she returned to Scotland, where search was being made for Turner's money.

Overton had promised to befriend Turner as much as he

could without prejudice to his own position. The opportunity came when Cromwell undertook the subjugation of Ireland. As soon as Cromwell left England, Overton propounded a scheme to Turner which he thought might lead to his release, and it did. A Colonel Nidam, killed in the Parliament's service, had left his wife poor. On his suggestion the widow would, he felt sure, petition Parliament to give her a prisoner, for whose liberty she should get some recompense. Parliament would refer the petition to Fairfax, and he could deal with him through his secretary, Mr Clarke. Turner closed with the offer, and sure enough the Governor received a letter from Fairfax. He was to be set free, provided he went beyond seas, and did not return to any of the three kingdoms for a year. Not a word was said about the widow or money. Turner offered to pay fifty pounds, and ten to the Secretary, but Overton declined it as too much, and would accept only forty for the widow and five for Mr Clarke. Nor would he or his lady suffer him to present any token of his gratitude.

After an anxious wait of six weeks for a ship—he feared some new order might come to take away his liberty,—Turner sailed for Hamburg in the beginning of November 1649, where he found many Scots at the orders of Montrose, about to embark on his last and fatal expedition. With one of these, Colonel Sibbald, he travelled by land to Holland. Sibbald carried letters from Montrose to Scotland, and he was short of money. Turner wrote to his wife to furnish him with some, which she did. "And he had his head chopped off not long after at the Cross of Edinburgh"; so were lost both friend and money. The winter was spent in Holland, and in March 1650 he attended at Breda the meeting of Charles with the Scottish Commissioners. The King went with the Commissioners, Turner stayed behind. He thought of going to France, but was persuaded by Lord Carnegie to accompany him to Scotland. They landed at Aberdeen the day before Cromwell beat the Scottish army at Dunbar, and found that the prosecution of those who had engaged with the Duke of Hamilton was as hot as ever, which obliged them to leave the town the same night. His wife joined him in Fife, and they lived quietly at Dysart throughout the winter.

Tied up in a queer mad tangle of politics and religion, the King found himself practically a prisoner. Some were for him, some against, and all, or nearly all, were opposed to Cromwell. The army, purged by the godly, was almost without officers. Confronted with the consequences of its folly, the Kirk took fright. If Charles in all insincerity had swallowed the tests, why not others? The unregenerate, and those who had fought for the late

King, could be put through the same process. No one was deceived; it was make-believe on both sides. Turner emerged from his retreat.

They were ill-disposed towards him. He had defied the Kirk in the person of Mr Dick. For long they demurred, but at length he was made Adjutant-General, and afterwards by command of the King given a regiment. Cut off by Cromwell from the north, the army marched into England. It was 1648 over again, with Worcester for the knock-out blow. The King escaped, but thousands were carried away prisoners to London. Among them was Turner. The officers were given parole, but General Dalzell and Lieut.-General Drummond, knowing that Turner meant to escape if opportunity offered, refused to sign, so that he might not be the only one and suspected. The story of his flight is entertaining.

"The second night of our stay at Oxford, with the help of our host, a barger, a barber, and a shoemaker, I got out of the top of the house, and through one other void house, escaping all our guards both of horse and foot, not without obstructions and some merry passages, the memory whereof was afterwards pleasant, though then I ran twice the near hazard of breaking my neck. I lay two days and nights in the garret of a new house, which had neither door nor window in it. The search, which was not very strict, being over, and the prisoners with their guards pretty well advanced towards London, I crept out of my retreat, and in a very pitiful disguise, accompanied with half a dozen of watermen (who had all served the late King as sojers), took my journey straight to London. The first day I walked afoot to Morley, which was twenty miles from Oxford; but my feet were so spoiled with the clouted shoes which I wore, and myself so weary, that my companions were forced to carry me almost the last two miles. Lusty, strong, and loyal fellows they were, but extremely debauched. They missed not one alehouse in the way, and my paying for all the ale and beer they drank (for I thank God they would drink no wine) did not at all trouble me; but it was a vexation to me to drink cup for cup with them, else they should have had no opinion of me, and to them I was necessitated to reveal myself, my honest barger going before us all the way a-horseback, and so serving us for a scout. At Morley I hired an old carcase of a horse from a knavish old fellow, who made himself exceedingly merry with me, jeering me very broadly; and indeed I was in so awful a plight that I was ridiculous enough, neither could any man have conceived that ever I had been an officer in any army of the world. On horseback I came to Bramford, thirteen

miles from Morley, and seven from London, and rode through at least two hundred redcoats that had convoyed my countrymen to Tittlefield; but was well seconded in passing them by my trusty comrades, the watermen. At Bramford I took oars, and in the night-time landed at Westminster stairs, which I had never seen; for I came in an evil hour to London, where I had never been before. I was lodged that night with an honest Welshman, to whom my barger revealed what I was, that he might make me known to some of the Royal party, for I had no acquaintances in that great city."

Three loyalists sent him clothes and money. He returned the money. Some of his own was left, and General Dalzell had lent him ten pieces, "one whereof I gave to my hostess at Oxford, when she lighted me to the garret of her house; one other I gave to the barger's wife as a token. Six I spent in my two days' journey to London; the rest maintained me well enough till I was supplied out of Scotland." The barger and watermen, stout good fellows, would take nothing. He drank a dozen of beer on parting with them, and to every one he offered a twenty shilling gold piece, but could only persuade each to accept half a crown, with which they said they would drink his health on their return to Oxford.

His new friends kept him posted in all that happened, and he was careful, changing his quarters from inn to inn until he finally found a safe lodging, so safe indeed that it ensured the safety of another. Scotsmen filled the streets, mainly soldiers, and he feared their "unseasonable kindness." When he went out it was either by coach or water, but he mostly kept to his apartment. The first three weeks were passed in great anxiety as to the fate of his wife in Dundee. At Oxford he heard the town had been sacked and "a world of blood spilt"—a true report. She saved nothing, only the clothes upon her, and returned to Dysart on foot.

Any steps to leave the country were impossible while the King, yet a fugitive, was hotly searched for. When Charles arrived in Paris, Turner made his plans. He also planned, with Major Strachan as go-between, the escape of General Middleton from the Tower, the success of which, as it chanced, made things more difficult for himself. Hearing through his English friends that Middleton's life would be taken, Turner caused a false key to be conveyed to his cell, and arranged for him to walk out accompanied by Captain Hay while the keeper drank with Strachan in an alehouse. Middleton, however, would not believe his life was at stake. So Turner left for abroad, helped by a pass obtained from a Mr Harry Knox. He stayed three or four nights with a married

sister in Kent, then, personating Mr Knox, presented his pass at Dover.

Unknown to him Middleton had escaped from the Tower the day before, and two hundred pounds were offered for his arrest. Dover was on the alert. The Governor, Colonel Temple, brought a Scotsman of the town, Mr Tours, to examine him, and Mr Tours was like to undo him with questions. While the Governor bowed his head to spit, Turner gave Mr Tours a sign. "He proved an honest man, and indeed saved me, by not putting me to answer any more hard interrogatories." Colonel Temple in the end passed him as a servant of the old Earl of Morton, "which James Tours knew well enough to be a lie."

Turner's friends in the city must have had first-hand information. Sir Arthur Hazelrigg and Lambert's lady discovered to Middleton's wife the truth of it—her husband was to die. The arrangements made held good, and Middleton, all the time he stayed in London, lay safe in Turner's old lodging. Turner's brother-in-law, Mr Simpson, had accompanied him to Dover. He urged Simpson to haste to London and find Middleton. He also sent the pass, which would prove of use anywhere but at Dover. Mr Simpson left that night, hid Middleton at his father's house in the country, and, after one disheartening miscarriage, procured a boat to carry him to France.

The exiled court was split up into "factions and fractions." Turner did not trouble it much. He retired from the company of his countrymen in Paris to the suburb of St Antoine that he might learn to speak French, having mastered the grammar when a prisoner at Hull. Here he remained till the contending armies of the King of France and the Prince of Condé drove him back to the city. "But not before I saw the Prince his forces, after a stout resistance, beaten into the Port of St Antoine; which being shut, they had in all probability been sacrificed to Cardinal Mazarin's just revenge, if the Duke of Orleans had not forced the gunners of the Bastile to discharge all their cannon against his master and nephew the King of France, who was personally present with his army; and that his daughter Mademoiselle had not, with her virago-like presence and eloquence, cajoled the burgess guards so well, that without consent of the magistrates, they opened the port."

Some loyal chiefs and the Earl of Glencairn were active for the King in the Highlands. Middleton was appointed Captain-General. But first he and Turner had to raise the wind among the Scots merchants trading in the Low Countries. After great delays Middleton sailed from Amsterdam for the north. Turner, at Bremen, told to follow and unable to get a suitable ship, landed in Fife.

On reaching Anstruther he stepped ashore under cover of night. His clothes, pistols, carbines, and saddles the skipper buried underground at Culross. These were recovered "with great hazard and difficulty" when he had procured horses. Falling in with some officers who professed to be on their way to the army, they rode together to Lochearn, where he met others like them. There he got stuck, led up and down the country, but nowhere near where the army lay. He was still lurking in Lochearn, in danger from an English garrison at Drummond Castle, when numbers of horsemen from the King's army passed through seeking their homes upon a defeat at Lochgarry. They were in bad case, both horses and men, but willing, if looked after, to continue in the service. He wrote to the Earl of Glencairn "in the isle of Macfarlan," offering to lead these men to him if his lordship would name a rendezvous. The Earl replied that he had left the army, and would have nothing more to do with Middleton or the King's affairs. This decided Turner. He conceived it his duty to get out of Scotland as soon as he could so that the King might know how matters stood.

A fair occasion seemed to offer itself. Menzies, a Lieutenant of Horse, who had some twenty troopers with him, and the officers out of Fife, knew of a house in Kirkcaldy where were two hundred pairs of pistols which they coveted. Turner persuaded them to the hazard. On the second day's march thirty well-mounted men barred their way. Turner charged. Six were killed, four taken. Menzies behaved well in the fight, but as he slew one of the prisoners in cold blood, Turner separated from them, setting out for Fife alone. Lady Braco, whose son was in hiding near-by, found him a guide. The guide mistook his way in the darkness and rain; they got bogged in a moss and all but failed to extricate themselves. "I never in all my life felt or saw so sad and so heavy a rain, nor so palpable a dark night." At Anstruther he found an honest skipper and embarked for Ostend, being as glad to get out of Scotland as he was three years before to get out of England.

Middleton had left Turner in the lurch. There was a rift within the lute. To carry the news of his defeat and disagreement with Glencairn could hardly fail to widen it. The King kept Glencairn's letter. Without that letter Turner would not have been believed. They proposed to send him back to Scotland, and he professed readiness, but spoke of himself as a very improper person to employ in composing a difference between two, to neither of which he was acceptable. "After this free language, I was no more desired to go." A course of the hot baths at Aix-la-Chapelle cured him of the itch, "which is

epidemical almost in the place from whence I brought it, the Highlands," and the King gave him a pass to go to Bremen, but not to leave his service. All was lost in Scotland. General Dalzell arrived at Bremen in disguise. He went to Muscovy, and Turner did not see him again for ten years. Turner stayed in Bremen with his wife. He refused an offer of service against the Poles, as the King of Sweden and Cromwell were hand and glove.

In the spring of 1656 Turner was under the necessity to bestir himself for a living. This entailed a parting from his wife. "I thought this separation of mine from her did too near resemble death; for I had no visible ground for any hope to see her again; I not being permitted to come to the country whither she was going, and there being but small probability that I could expect any fortune so soon as might invite her to come and take a share of it." He encountered Middleton at Amsterdam, and "after some fair expostulations on both parts," they were, as he thought, very good friends. To provide as far as possible for his impoverished adherents, the King, by permission of Don John of Austria, raised three regiments under the command of the Duke of York. All the captains were to be Lords, Knights, or Colonels, sixteen of them Scots, of which Turner was one. But he never saw his company, nor reaped any benefit from it except a hundred and fifty guldens. At the King's request Middleton and Turner went to Danzig to levy an army for Spain on behalf of Poland. The Spaniards boasted of the money they were prepared to spend, and held out a rosy prospect, but it was the worst Turner had yet faced. They arrived penniless, the sum advanced being barely sufficient for the journey. And no money ever came. They borrowed from the magistrates and private persons "more than is yet well paid." That spent, they were obliged to leave the inn where they lodged and take up houses apart, their credit gone, and everything except their wearing clothes in pawn. They "breathed rather than lived."

With Middleton's permission Turner offered his services to the King of Denmark. Sir William Davidson advanced him fifty dollars, a person who owed twenty repaid them, and "old Mr Gallenden" lending twenty more, he made out the voyage to the Sound. Commissioned to raise a regiment, he decided to enlist half the men in Holland, half in Danzig, so would only take half the levy money at Amsterdam. Events moved quickly. While he was yet in Holland, the King of Sweden overran Denmark to an extent that compelled a peace and the discharge of the levies. Then Turner realised how foolish he had been. The other Colonels, who took their levy money in full, "were never brought to any account at all."

He asked the ambassador to make good what he was pleased to regard as his loss, and the ambassador, naturally, declined. Protesting that the King's capitulation with him was "broke and violated," he threatened legal proceedings, and terms of settlement were come to. These, with the unexpended money of the original payment—about two-thirds—so far set him up in funds that he sent for his wife and lived at the Hague until in two years' time the King came into his own.

The King knighted Turner at the Restoration, and told his Commissioner to provide for him, which very pointedly he did not do. Middleton was the Commissioner. Turner had lent an ear to Middleton's enemies. After Cromwell's death, the Scots lords began to pluck up courage again, and as Mr Bruce, afterwards Earl of Kincardine, was going to Holland in any case, they desired him to see the King and get his commands. Mr Bruce bluntly refused to risk his estate, and suggested that he should be authorised to employ Turner, on the principle apparently that he had nothing to lose. Bruce came to the Hague, and Turner consented, rather unwillingly, however, because he was asked to notify the King that another General than Middleton should be named to them. Turner disliked that, nor did he agree with it, and was "very shy to propose anything to Middleton's prejudice." In failing to act on this honourable prompting he erred. The King liked the inhibition as little. The Restoration came with a rush, and the Scots had no need of a general, but Turner found Middleton's power greater and his kindness less. The truth is, in these matters he was not worldly wise. Middleton was an Earl now, High Commissioner for Scotland, Captain-General of the Forces there, Captain of the Castle of Edinburgh, an Extraordinary Lord of Session.

Turner was unemployed until, in August 1662, at the King's express command, he raised a company of Foot Guards. Episcopacy had been imposed upon Scotland, and the south and west were in a ferment. To his misfortune he was "to be employed thereafter for disarming some people in the west, it being my fate that nothing was intended to be done that was displeasing to that country but wherein I was made instrumental." Twice he was sent to Galloway to exact compliance with the new Church ordinances, and when in January 1666 he was ordered there a third time, it was with so much disinclination for the duty that he delayed till March. Turner knew he was set an impossible task. His instructions were from the High Commissioner, the Earl of Rothes, Middleton's successor. He was to quarter on and fine disfrequenters of the Church, and those who married and bap-

tised with or harboured the fugitive ministers, whom he was to apprehend. The result was as might have been foreseen. Yet he tempered his instructions, as the Covenanters themselves admitted when they captured his orders. "I dealt as favourably as I could with those who were averse from Church government. And here I shall take leave, once for all, to write an undoubted truth, which is, that I was so far from exceeding or transgressing my commission and instructions, that I never came the full length of them; sometimes not exceeding the sixth part of the fines, sometimes not the third, and seldom the half; and many fines I never exacted at all, upon the parties' promises of future compliance."

The storm broke eight months later. On the 15th November he was surprised and seized at his lodging in Dumfries by a party of a hundred and fifty Covenanters, horse and foot, the first overt act of a rising in the west. His men, a ridiculous seventy in all, were mostly quartered on delinquents in the country, and he was ill. They took his money and papers, horses, arms, and linens, and could scarcely be persuaded to allow him to put on his clothes. Captain Gray, in command, fearful of pursuit, hastened to the hills. At Carsphairn he left the sick Turner and sixteen horsemen in a house, and disappeared with the plunder. Captain Gray, in short, was a crook. No one ever knew where he came from or where he went. But this was no advantage to Turner. His guards were of the real stuff. The party grew in strength and importance, and marched into Ayrshire. Mr John Welch, the preacher, among his other activities, endeavoured to win Turner to the cause. Turner, who was genuinely concerned for their fate, warned him of the folly and consequences of pitting themselves against the King's standing forces. "But by these discourses I prevailed as much with him as he did with me by his. I called for a cup of ale, purposely that I might hear him say grace." He confesses that he was more overwearied, if sometimes entertained, with the tediousness and impertinences of their graces before and after meat, than he was either with the scarceness or badness of his meat and drink. Other minor inconveniences were the state of his health, the constant movement in bad weather, and insults from the more fanatical. He was closely and heavily guarded. At first they resolved to dispatch him should opposition be met with, but he was in no danger of his life after Colonel Wallace took over the command, though at Lanark the Council deliberated whether he should die, and delay was carried by one vote only. Wallace had known Turner in Germany. They tried to keep him from seeing too much, but nothing escaped the old campaigner—numbers, equipment,

and training. The latter he thought marvellous, considering the circumstances; of the men he says, "I never saw lustier fellows than these foot were, or better marchers."

The end of the rebellion at Rullion Green in the Pentlands brought release. The battle had its risks for Turner, albeit a prisoner. He was in the field from start to finish. Foreseeing the likelihood of being cut down in the event of a defeat, he said to his guards, "If the King's forces gain the victory, defend you me from the violence of your party in the flight, and I shall assure you of your lives." They agreed, having little stomach for the fight, and doubt as to the outcome. He thought his opportunity was come when the rebel horse fled, but a wounded officer rode up, who said he must go with him, as he was more necessary to them than ever now that the day was lost. Turner explained that being poorly mounted without spurs —they had taken them from him—he would not be able to keep up, and counselled him to seek his own safety, the while keeping an eye on the pursuing troopers. As soon as they were near enough for his purpose, he glanced over his shoulder, and called to the officer to ride for his life. "This advice he followed by galloping away." Only four of his guards were left, and he persuaded them to turn with him. Upon his supplication their lives and liberties were granted, and he gave each of them a little money to carry them to their homes. A man who had been useful to him when a prisoner, he afterwards saved from hanging at Ayr.

Of course, those responsible shifted the blame for the insurrection from their own to Turner's shoulders. They spoke of his severity, his indiscreet zeal. An inquiry which he asked for was denied him. That was to come in their own good time and way. Meanwhile with the country at war with France, Denmark, and Holland, he and his Guards were required, and sent into Fife. But first he was called away to Glasgow by the serious illness of his wife. "All the crosses that had ever befallen me, and the last one too, which was one of the greatest, seemed nothing to me in comparison of that I then suffered, by the sad apprehension I had to be separated from so dear and so precious a yoke-fellow." He stayed with her until she was out of danger. "This mercy comforted me more than my late misfortune had afflicted me."

A Dutch fleet of thirty-two sail came up the Firth of Forth, fired off their cannons at Burntisland, and killed a fisherman at Wemyss, otherwise Fife was undisturbed, and Turner at St Andrews thought "it was as well so." He had no opinion at all of those in the command, and this opinion was confirmed when peace came. Three companies of the Guards, stationed at Anstruther, were to be sent

to France. To this they objected, and mutinied, demanding their pay. The officers fled, although the King had declared that no man was to be forced to go. They did not even trouble to report the occurrence. Turner heard of it by chance at midnight. He immediately set various detachments in motion, and himself marched to Elie. "I sent Lieutenant Livingstone of Westquarter, who belonged to these mutinous companies, to tell the mutineers that I was come to hear and redress their grievances, and therefore required them to meet me without the town in the field. They returned me answer, that for several reasons they could not leave the town, but I should be very welcome to come in to them. I did so, and was met at the entry by thirty musketeers, for my honour, said they, to convoy me to the shore, where I found them all in arms, with their colours flying. I was environed round, and so close, that I could not get my horse moved from the place where I stood. I perceived the mutiny had come to a great height, for they had chosen their officers and speakers, and presented me with a petition directed to the Earl of Linlithgow, and in his absence, to me. I harangued them, and demonstrated to them the ugliness and folly of this action of theirs; I cried up their former loyalty and services, and advised them not to stain the reputation of them by this tumultuary and unadvised rashness of theirs, which I would not term mutiny, whereof I knew so gallant men could not be guilty. I did not fail likewise to show them that I knew how to force the most disobedient of them to duty, but hoped they would be wiser as to put a necessity on either me, or those above me, to make use of our power. I rallied and made merry with some of them, and they made sport with me; and in the end, after many discourses, I promised they should be paid at Burntisland all was duly owing to them, and that none of them should be forced to go ashipboard against his will. They desired to be paid and disbanded there where they were; this I would by no means grant. Their muskets were charged with two balls at least, many with three; some of the mutineers gave fire upon the houses over my head. At length I commanded drums to beat, and crying, "God save the King," which they likewise did, I ordered the colours to follow me; and without more noise carried them fairly to Leven, seven miles from the place where they were, and the next day to Burntisland, where they were all disarmed and disbanded."

While this fine soldierly action was adoing, he knew there was an intrigue on foot to deprive him of his command and give it to the Earl of Kellie. He therefore resolved "rather to go out, than to be thrust out,"

retaining only his commission as Major. The net was closing. His enemies had got at the King, and an inquiry was ordered. When told of it officially, Turner said he thought it strange that a twelvemonth had been allowed to lapse, and the reply was, "So long as the army stood, you were too strong for your accusers, neither durst they be seen against you; but now that the forces, for most part, are disbanded, the Council may take notice of you with less trouble." The inquiry was a farce. They held that he was liable to punishment for giving obedience to illegal commands, and sent an under clerk of the Exchequer at "fifteen shillings sterling *per diem*" into Galloway to "invite, desire, nay, constrain men to complain." This paper evidence was accepted unquestioned by all but Turner. The King in Council decreed that he was to lay down his commission and account for the moneys he had received, "and what I was found to be justly owing, to take it from me, and put it to such pious uses as they thought fitting." The money matter was not pressed. His accounts were passed, no one being in a position to dispute them, and by this time feeling was veering round in his favour. Probably Turner did not wrong himself. For the rest, we have only to think of the "killing times" under Dalzell and Claverhouse, his successors in the west, to gauge the hypocrisy of the whole proceedings.

"My livelihood," he says, "was taken from me, not without some reflection on my reputation." A dozen years passed before he was given another command. But Turner possessed resources that Kings cannot touch, "the intellectuals which God hath bestowed upon me." As skilled with the pen as the sword, he wrote his 'Memoirs' and much else, and had an outlook on life which any man might envy. "I profess myself no stoic, nor have I indeed that apathy or insensibility to the strokes of fortune and afflictions whereof they foolishly boast, yet I may without vanity say that the King's displeasure with me being set aside, I have been but little moved with these changes of fortune that hath befallen me; nor have they brangled my resolutions from looking on prosperity and adversity with an equal eye, nor shall hinder me, so far as God shall enable me with grace, to keep a good conscience before God, and unspotted loyalty to my Prince, and fair and honest dealing with all men, at least in as high a degree as man in the state of imperfection can reach to." So modest a claim may not be disallowed. He belonged, where we all belong, to those classed by Fielding as the mixed kind, neither totally good nor bad.

IT BEGAN WITH A BOOK.

We had been celebrating that evening, I remember; nothing, of course, in the way of a serious affair, for we had all kept our watches the night before, we had been working cargo since dawn, and were sailing again at midnight after twenty-four hours of ceaseless grind that would have sent a landsman grumbling to his superiors, but which a sailor accepts as he accepts almost everything in life—including his pay—with philosophy.

We were tired men, and it was hot; hot as only an Eastern seaport can be before the coming of the south-west monsoon. But some one had come across from the Company ship lying astern of us—the *Kurduwadi*, outward bound—to tell us that old Shortie had got his command at last; and we felt justified in consuming a few extra whiskies after dinner when the cargo-work had eased up, and we had time to collect our thoughts and perhaps an hour or two's sleep before the signal for stations. Yes, we felt justified in finishing the Second Mate's bottle of whisky and signing a chit for another; for Shortie had sailed with us for three or four voyages, and was one of the best-liked chiefs in the Company. Besides, at a time when promotion seemed almost at a standstill, we were ready to drink to anybody's 'step,' if it decreased the perspective of one's own far-distant and problematical rise.

We were in the Second Mate's cabin, four of us, including Chalmers of the *Kurduwadi* who had brought the good news and had stayed, as he remarked, to help christen it. There was going on outside the usual din which accompanies the working of cargo in every port in the world; but in this case, between the thuds and the banging, the whir of the winches, and the deep siren of a ship out in the roads, we could distinguish now and again the whining oriental voices of hawkers on the wharf, and the absurd spasmodic tinkling of some temple-bell which called up visions of priests in yellow robes, of pungent pink and white flower-wreaths, of butter-lamps, sickly-sweet incense, and a lot of forms bowing together in a dimly-lit courtyard.

We sat there in our soaked cotton uniforms, mopping our faces and talking in desultory murmurs of Shortie's good luck, of the accursedness of all tropical ports, of the clumsiness of the Fourth Mate, who, coatless and dripping, was juggling with bottles and glasses and ice. Garrick, the Second, sprawled in his bunk, remarked in a drowsy voice that if it wasn't so damned hot he'd mix the drinks himself to prevent good whisky being wasted. In spite

of the blower roaring and hissing over our heads, the air in that cabin seemed to hang round our bodies like a stifling pall. There wasn't a breath outside. Through the open scuttles the lights ashore, reflected in the inky stretch of the harbour, burned unwaveringly like immense stars in a motionless universe; as though they, too, lay spellbound beneath the insuperable immobility of the darkness and the heat.

The Fourth Mate, ending his labours with a vast sigh, inquired: "Where's Burwood? We must have Burwood. I've poured out his drink."

We all became moved at that by a sudden desire for Burwood's presence. Without stirring in our chairs we murmured in various tones of mild reproach, of complaint, even of warm affection: "Yes, we must have old Burwood. Where *is* Burwood? He must be in on this. Can't drink to Shortie without Burwood." Only Garrick, it appeared, had sufficient energy to shout with a supreme effort above the noise of the blower and the cries of the stevedores: "Burwood! Here!"

We relapsed then into a complete stupor until the face of Burwood was thrust round the door-curtain.

"Come in and have a drink, laddie," said Garrick. He waved his hand slightly in the direction of Chalmers. "Have you met our Super-Second? Chalmers — Third — *Kurduwadi*."

Burwood's face, expressing a mixture of affability and doubt, was heard to observe that he didn't know whether he ought to come in; he had a bloke in his cabin.

"Bring him in too," we called out in the access of our hospitality. Burwood, suddenly stepping through the curtain and speaking in the low voice of a conspirator, said hurriedly: "Well, he's rather a queer old boy. I can't make out what he's doing on board. I found him wandering about when I came up from dinner. He's nothing to do with the agents. He's a shore-bloke. And yet he's been yarning away to me for half an hour about the Company and the ships and the officers and God knows what. I can't get rid of him."

We stared at him solemnly while this information disseminated itself among the fumes of heat and whisky in our brains.

Garrick, sitting up in his bunk and scratching his chest, pronounced at last with considerable decision, "He's after a drink," as though he had probed with infinite subtlety the mental processes of Burwood's unwanted visitor.

"No, I don't think he is," replied Burwood with a disconcerting finality. He went on in a slightly awestruck voice, "I offered him one and he refused. All he seems to want is just to sit there and gas away about who's in command here and who's in command there, and what's hap-

pened to this ship and what's happened to that. As a matter of fact, he's quite interesting. I'll swear he's been at sea sometime in his life."

"Well, look here," said Garrick impatiently, "you must come in here. We've got some news for you. If you can't get rid of the old boy, bring him along. He won't worry us."

"Shall I? All right. Hang on a minute," Burwood exclaimed, and dived for the curtain, his head reappearing momentarily to announce in a stage whisper accompanied by an apologetic grin, "Feel a bit sorry for the poor old chap."

"Bring another glass," Garrick called after him; and the raised voice of Burwood was heard in the alley-way, "Joe! Joe! Where the devil are you? Doosra gin-glass lao."

We sat in silence listening to a murmured conversation in the next cabin of which the words were indistinguishable. Without the least warning a skinny brown hand proffering a glass protruded itself through the curtain; and almost before the Fourth Mate had taken it Burwood returned, followed by an elderly man in a soiled white suit.

There was nothing, so far as I can remember, in the least arresting or even unusual about the appearance of that importunate guest whose presence on board no one could account for. He struck me as being one of those eminently unassuming and rather unsatisfactory individuals you may find in a score of Eastern ports, generally frequenting the less respectable hotels and bars, clinging to precarious odds and ends of jobs and to the last remnants of their importance as a sahib; now a little more prosperous, now a little more disreputable, and certain of nothing in this life except that they will never see home again. Not necessarily because they are unable to go home, but because they do not wish to. They have become inoculated with the easiness of a life in which the solitary fact of the colour of their skins preserves them from a descent to manual labour, to the position of under-dog; and they are no longer capable of exchanging this final and inalienable distinction, this right to be served, to be salaamed and given way to in the street, for the equality, the hardships, and the competition of the life at home.

I suppose, in the youthful assurance of my first glance, I dismissed that nondescript and slightly shabby old man as of no account. I noted the frayed suit, the worn canvas shoes, the dilapidated topee clutched under one arm; I noted these things and accepted the story they told. And yet I was moved to offer him my chair and perch uncomfortably on the foot of Garrick's bunk by nothing more tangible, I believe, than the pathetic and almost oriental reserve of his faded blue eyes, by an air of diffidence, of complete docility which even then impressed me

as being no more than the cloak of an immense resignation.

He was introduced all round, although he never told us his own name; he accepted, with an unexpected courtliness of manner, the drink offered him by the Fourth Mate; and he sat there, blinking slightly in the strong pink glare—Garrick affected silk lamp-shades more suitable for a drawing-room than the cabin of the Second Mate of a liner,—and remarking in a mild and educated voice, "Thank you, gentlemen. This is exceedingly kind of you, gentlemen."

He didn't seem to want to talk about himself, and I suppose none of us liked to question him, so the conversation reverted at once to the subject of Shortie's promotion. Burwood, the only one of us who never appeared to suffer from the heat, became uproariously cheerful, and announced that his days as a Super-Second were already numbered, that he could feel promotion in his bones, that he would command a fine ship of his own in ten years' time.

The old man sat there sipping his whisky and listening without a word and without a smile. I remember wondering whether he felt out of it and calling to him across Burwood's unquenchable chatter, "An old shipmate of ours. Just got a command. Naturally, we're celebrating."

He looked at me with a kind of intent and weary stare. "Ah, yes, promotion," he said at last; "a very fine thing."

This struck me at the time as a peculiarly inane and obvious remark; but I thought that perhaps he was a little deaf and hadn't understood me. I gave up trying to talk to him then. He seemed perfectly content to sit there nursing his glass and his antique topee, glancing at each speaker in turn with an expression of unobtrusive watchfulness. He had, too, a curious aspect of impermanence, and I became obsessed by the idea—I was perfectly sober—that if I took my eyes off him for long he would be gone when I looked back.

At this point Burwood, draining his glass and striking a pugnacious attitude—the spirits of that youth were always inexhaustible,—exclaimed loudly, "Who says this is a rotten profession? It's a damn fine profession. As long as you know your job you're bound to get to the top. It's only a question of time." He defied us mutely to insinuate that it was generally a question of a very long time. "Think of the poor devils in business ashore. They can be as efficient as hell, know their job from A to Z. But what good does it do them? They're absolutely at the mercy of any clerk absconding with their securities, of something happening on the other side of the world which starts a panic on the Stock Exchange. But in our profession efficiency always pays." His slightly illogical optimism, born of Shortie's

good fortune, began to spread ambitious wings. "Wasn't Shortie an efficient officer? Of course he was. Damned efficient. I tell you there's always room at the top for a really efficient officer."

Somebody—Chalmers, I think—expostulated mildly, "Supposing you get at the mercy of an unexpected set and run your ship ashore. They won't give you tuppence for your efficiency then. Dismissed the Company without appeal."

Burwood obliterated every current in the seven seas with a magnificent gesture.

"But don't you see, laddie," he assured him with tremendous gravity, "if you're really efficient you won't be at the mercy of anything—not even of a drift."

Garrick, rising up authoritatively in his bunk, expounded with the judicial finality suitable to his seniority, "You've got to be ready for an emergency like that—for any emergency. In our job you've got to be ready to pull yourself together at any and every moment. And you can't ever afford to be careless. If you are, then—finish. If you're not—you get on. Fill up the glasses, Fourth Mate."

"There you are," exulted Burwood. "There you have it in one. Know your job. Be ready for anything. You're bound to get to the top. There's nothing to stop you. Here's to old Shortie!"

We lifted our glasses and drank; and as though that final outburst of the irrepressible Burwood had momentarily exhausted our conversation, a silence fell in the cabin.

The old man, stirring suddenly in his chair, put down his glass on the table with a deliberate movement.

"No," he said slowly, and we could not have stared at him in greater surprise if his voice had emerged from the bulkhead behind him, "there's nothing to stop you—unless it's bad luck."

We were all so taken aback at his intervention that several seconds must have passed before Garrick answered in a tone of amiable scorn, "Bad luck! We all know what that means. A man says he's had bad luck if he drinks too much, or makes a mess of his navigation, or gets caught out doing something on the side. It's always the same old story. But in nine cases out of ten it's nothing but weakness or carelessness. That's another thing you can't allow for in our profession—luck."

We waited for the old man to speak; and as though he had suddenly come to a difficult decision, he began all at once in a mild and slightly husky voice: "And yet I knew a man who was absolutely done for because of something which, I believe, you would all agree was nothing but bad luck. You can prepare yourselves for every emergency under the sun, gentlemen, you can cultivate to perfection the art of pulling yourselves together at any and every moment, and yet not one of you would have

come out of that episode any more creditably than the man whose career it ended. Bad luck. You cannot put it down to anything else. Though, mind you, he didn't call it that himself. He had a Celtic strain in him, and he was too fatalistic to regard it as anything but a stroke of destiny. A blind and meaningless stroke, if you like. But doesn't destiny generally seem blind and meaningless to us all? For, you see, it followed him about. He was never able to get away from it. It was inescapable as only destiny can be. But you, who are much too young and—forgive me—much too untried to believe in such things, would call it bad luck. A little bad temper, too, you might say. But which of you has not been equally bad tempered in similar circumstances? A little impulsive, you might say. But which of you has not been guilty of far more impulsive actions, and yet has escaped the consequences? No, no, gentlemen, you must call it bad luck."

There was certainly something impressive about that flow of calm unhurried loquacity from the silent yet attentive figure which had sat among us a little stiffly, a little drawn apart from the intimacy of our conversation. That shabby stranger, suddenly talking away at his ease, like a guest of honour unbending over an after-dinner cigar, had unaccountably become the focus of our interest; and even Garrick took the trouble to get up off his bunk and fill the old man's glass himself.

"We can't call it anything, old chap," he observed encouragingly, "until we've heard the story."

"The story," echoed the stranger, "yes, I could tell you the story. He told it to me himself, as I might be telling you now. A good many years ago, of course. But some of you may have come across him. Did I tell you he was an officer in the Company? His name?"

The old man studied our faces for a full half-minute before inquiring in a cautious tone if any of us had ever sailed with an Erskine. "But, of course, you're all too young. Too young even to have served your time with him, I expect."

Burwood said that he believed the Chief had been Fourth Mate with an Erskine. "I've heard him mention the name, I think. Said he was the best Second he ever kept watch with."

The old fellow was on to that like a knife.

"Who's the Chief here?" he asked.

"Paisley," we told him. "Damned good chap. Never interferes—tells you your job and leaves you to get on with it."

We were in the mood just then, I daresay, to regard every one, including our cantankerous commander, as a damned good chap.

Our visitor was muttering away to himself: "Paisley. Yes, that would be the man."

He looked up with an odd smile. "I met him once, gentlemen, in my seafaring days. So he remembers poor Erskine, does he? That's good of him. People don't remember failures easily. At least, not to speak well of them. And yet I don't mind telling you that a lot of people shared Paisley's opinion. There was a time when Erskine was considered to have very good prospects indeed. He joined the Company just when it was expanding rapidly, and his promotion was swift and certain. No waiting ten years for your step as you may to-day. He was Second Mate at twenty-five. He was a thoroughly efficient officer, popular with each of his Captains, and well served by his subordinates. Ambitious, too. You may fairly say he lived for his work. His first big ship as Second was the old *Samarang*—you don't remember her, she was sold the other day for scrap-iron after years in the Molucca trade,—and he was a very proud young man indeed when he first stepped over her gangway. I daresay this craft of yours might make her accommodation look a little rough to-day, but she had lines, yes, sir, she had lines. By God, that ship had a flare that could take your breath away when you came close round under her stem on a moonlight night in harbour. You don't get lines like that nowadays. I won't say these new ships aren't fine for their purpose — splendid cargo-carriers. Why, you could have had the *Samarang* over as easy as capsizing a dinghy if you took all the cargo out of her without loading some new stuff——"

"Well, there was young Erskine, Second Mate of that fine ship, ambitious, capable, well spoken of, recommended for promotion, with nothing, apparently, on the face of the seven seas to prevent him from reaching a good command and his heart's desire. And yet, on that very deck which he so proudly surveyed for the first time, there was to be enacted, within a few short months, a scene which was to finish his career as a seaman and send him into oblivion for the rest of his days.

"They tell us, you know, that now and again we are vouchsafed an inkling, or a premonition, call it what you will, when fate is going to deal us one of those staggering blows which change the aspect of our lives for good or ill. Though I should be hard put to it to tell you what benefit anyone would be likely to get from such a proceeding. Forewarned is forearmed, they say. But what is the use of being forewarned about an occurrence when it has got to happen just the same—when all the forewarning in the world won't enable you to alter its course by so much as a word, a gesture, the least movement of your hand, the slightest inflection of your voice?

"I see you are smiling,

gentlemen. Well, I have knocked about for over a quarter of a century in Eastern ports—some of them far more God-forsaken than this one, I can assure you,—and if I have learnt nothing else, I have learnt the impossibility of struggling against fate. Yes, there's a good deal to be said for these orientals and their fatalism. Perhaps it doesn't appeal to you now, leading a fine life, with your good food and your good quarters and money coming to you at the end of the voyage. You feel, I daresay, that you are capable of managing your own destinies. But put yourselves in my place, gentlemen, imagine yourselves getting old and lonely, without a relative and with precious few friends, and you will understand that it's very comforting to have something to fall back on which can't be affected by your own capacities for success or failure.

"But I was telling you about Erskine. You must let an old man talk, gentlemen; you must let an old man tell his story in his own way. Yes, Erskine stepped on board the *Samarang* that day and no one could have been freer than he was from the slightest prescience of disaster. He saw life as I daresay you see it to-day—as a splendid affair, a past without regrets, a present devoted to the profession he loved, a bright and assured future. For the evil which was coming to him had not yet cast its shadow; and I am not talking foolishly when I tell you that, in my experience, it is the evil which descends on you without warning, like a tropical squall out of a clear sky, that is most to be feared.

"He sailed two or three voyages in the *Samarang*, and found her the happiest ship in the Company. He did his work well; he earned the praise of his commander, and the friendship of his brother officers. Then there came a day when they were lying in an Eastern port—it doesn't matter which one, though you must all of you have called at it time and time again. They were only in for a bare twenty-four hours, and Erskine, of course, as Second Mate, had been working cargo all day. It was hot, too—just about as hot as it is here now; the sort of heat that obsesses you with the idea that anything you touch will sear your flesh. I daresay the metal parts of the ship were hot enough to burn. But you don't need me to tell you about cargo-work in a pestilential airless harbour where the sea and the sky and the deck of the ship enclose you in an incandescent glare that pierces to the very marrow of your bones. You know only too well the sort of day that Erskine had spent—hours in the sun by an open hatch that seems to lead to a chasm of hell itself; hours in a stifling cabin having the life plagued out of you by agents' clerks and foremen-stevedores, and all the rag-tag-and-bobtail who

take an apparent delight in worrying a poor devil of a cargo officer out of whatever wits the heat has left him.

"He told me himself: 'They didn't give me a moment's peace that day.' Those were his words. I met him a few years afterwards in a shabby bar in Colombo. I wasn't prosperous enough myself at the time to frequent the Galle Face or the G.O.H. It was past the tiffin-hour, and the place was nearly empty—a few khitmutgars switching at the flies, a punkah deluging us with hot air, and a ghastly white glare filtering through the crack in the jalousies. 'No, they didn't give me a minute's peace,' he said, 'and we were to sail at sunset.'

"Mind you, he wasn't bitter about it. He saw the futility of blaming the climate and all those stevedores and agents' clerks (who, after all, were only going about their legitimate business). It wasn't their fault that he was tired out, edgy, and bad-tempered when sunset and sailing-time came. He made a particular point of that in telling me the story over a couple of gin-slings. As far as I could make out, he bore no rancour against any one; and there was nothing, he said, more despicable on God's earth than the man who reviles against his fate.

"I have no idea why I, a casual acquaintance, should have been picked out for his confidences. You may say that he was probably in the habit of fastening on people with a little time and money to waste and spinning them the yarn in return for the favour of a free drink. He certainly had nothing else at that time to give in return for the favour of anything. But somehow he didn't give the impression of being that sort of man. Be that as it may, there we were, stuck down on either side of a slopped-over table in that disreputable tavern in the neighbourhood of Chatham Street, and I let him talk. As you are letting me talk to-night.

"'I went aft in the usual way for stations,' he said. 'I can remember now walking along the promenade deck past a lot of passengers, and thinking what a relief it would be to get to sea and turn in before my watch.' He told me all this in a very matter-of-fact way, as though it had been happening to some one else. And he could remember every detail exactly with a kind of devastating clarity. You would have thought he had been through it all not half an hour ago. 'There were a lot of girls laughing over the rail at something going on on the wharf,' he told me, 'and a group of men being served with drinks by the smoke-room steward. One of them said in a loud pompous voice as I passed: "You won't get any one to take him on east of Bombay." Prophetic words! If you like to look at it in that light. If so, they were the only piece of prophecy in the

whole affair. The water of the harbour stretched right up to the ship's side without a ripple, a dhow lay becalmed in the roadstead waiting for the night breeze, and the sun was going down behind the city among a lot of pinkish clouds. You couldn't have found a more peaceful, a less sinister scene.'

"He stopped to feel in his pockets, and asked me in a shamefaced way if I had a cigarette to spare. Of course, I gave him one. I'd been through that sort of thing myself. You want to smoke, you feel instinctively for your case and remember it's gone; and you wonder whether the fellow you're with will object to your asking and know the real reason. Well, I gave him one, and after he had sent a few clouds of smoke into the vile atmosphere of that stagnant bar, he went on in a brisker tone.

"'When I got down to the main-deck I found a whole crowd of ag-wallahs at their sunset prayers. I realised that in the rush I'd forgotten to tell the serang to clear them out. They were right in the way of the cables.' He looked at me with a distressed air—the first sign of emotion he had shown. 'You know how it is,' he suddenly mumbled. 'A whole lot of them—always down there—never have any gumption. You generally tell the serang—and I'd forgotten.' I assured him that I was fully conversant with the stupidity of the ag-wallah. He said very low, clutching his glass so that the knuckles of his hand showed white: 'I cleared them out.' He repeated this in a louder tone as though that simple phrase gave him confidence to go on with his story. 'I cleared them out. I wasn't particularly angry. I was just anxious to get on with the job and impatient at the delay. They got up and moved out of the way all right. They didn't show any resentment—just looked at me with an idiotic and incomprehensible stare. I began to walk aft to the rail. I'd already forgotten that pack of natives. I was thinking of getting singled up, of casting off, of getting away from that pestilential port and having a good sleep before the middle watch. I was just going to give an order.'

"His eyes met mine with a faintly challenging expression; but I waited in silence—what could I say?—and he pursued, with a kind of dogged calm, a relentless and unemotional persistence, 'I saw a book lying on the deck at my feet. A fair-sized book, with a thick cover, very dirty, that might have been green. The pages looked thick, too, and had been fingered until the edges were filthy.' Oh, yes, he could describe that book well enough. The vision of that book, out of all the hundreds of books he must have seen and handled, will remain with him for the rest of his life. And I knew, from the way he described it, that he could see it at that

moment. I was amazed when he began again in a completely changed, almost conversational, tone: 'Do you know, I can't remember connecting that book with anything. I am so absolutely certain about everything else in that affair, and yet I can't be certain about the one thing that might have saved me. I don't believe I connected it with those ag-wallahs. I was in a hurry, there was a book in my path, and it struck me—perhaps quite absurdly—that a book shouldn't be lying about on the deck of a crack mail-steamer at the moment of sailing.'

"He took a deep breath and said with an extreme simplicity: 'I'm not making excuses for myself. I kicked it. I kicked it out of my way.' He smiled suddenly, and I had a horrible idea he was going to burst out laughing. But he went on quite soberly: 'That's all. Just a kick. A harmless enough action. And I was done for.' He passed his hand over his face. 'Everything happened in a rush after that. I heard a sort of growling behind me, a chattering like a lot of angry monkeys. I swung round and there was an ag-wallah close up to me, an old chap with a short white beard, like stubble. He was gibbering at me, and his eyes were starting out of his head with fury and hatred. They came at me, the lot of them. I—oh, what does it matter what I did after that? I had no time to sing out for help. I got hold of a belaying-pin from somewhere and fought my way through to the gangway leading to the promenade deck. They were close after me, and I had just enough sense to go up on to the after-end of the boat-deck instead of dashing among the passengers to the 'midships ladder. I tell you that boat-deck seemed about a mile long. I thought I could hear their bare feet and their beastly thin high voices at my elbow all the time. The last part was the worst—I had a horror of being caught in the alley-way by my cabin. When I reached it I locked myself in—the curtain got caught in the door, and it seemed for half an hour I was struggling to free that damned piece of stuff. But I locked myself in, snapped home the safety-catches of the jalousies, and waited. Even then I don't believe I realised what I had done.'"

The old man drained the last of his whisky and carefully stubbed out his cigarette end.

"And that, gentlemen, is the end of the story—so far as Erskine's own tale is concerned. I don't fancy that any one—and you least of all—would care to pry any further into the mind of that poor devil locked into a stifling cabin with the spectre of his own ruin and a clamouring at the door that might have been destiny itself demanding admittance. I don't think he came through the trial of those next few hours at all shabbily. But

then he had worse trials to face than being separated by nothing more than a wooden bulkhead from a pack of enraged natives before he was finished with the affair—if he ever was finished with it. And no one has ever questioned his courage. He had a revolver in that cabin. A weaker man might have shot himself—if he had realised exactly what fate was letting him in for when it induced him to commit that simple action, that harmless enough action, as he called it. But Erskine didn't realise it; not until the next morning, when he learned that a deputation of lascars to the Captain had asked for his removal out of the ship. It was a copy of the Koran he had kicked; he was an infidel, an unclean person; and he must go.

"Some people might think that an unheard-of piece of insolence from a handful of ignorant natives; but you who have to deal with the ill-favoured, cringing, crack-brained creatures will understand the fanaticism of their faith and the strength of their righteous anger—about the only sort of emotion you can get out of them except abject fear.

"The rest of the story you may have heard for yourselves. It went the round of the Company at the time, and even now it crops up when a few sailormen get talking anywhere east of Bombay. East of Bombay—what was the phrase? 'You won't get anyone to take him on east of Bombay.' That might have been Erskine's epitaph—the epitaph of his career if not of his life. He had to leave the *Samarang*—ship's discipline had to be maintained. And no one was to blame for that, least of all the Old Man, who was damned sorry to let him go. In time he went to another ship, and began to nurse a sneaking and not unreasonable hope that he had done with the business. But the business had by no means done with him. There came a day when the lascars refused to obey him; and he read in their sullen faces the awful inescapability of his own act. In ship after ship the same thing occurred. At times matters would go well for a whole voyage, at others for barely a week. The native habit of gossip, of mysterious and far-reaching communication, is not confined to the bazaars. And always, sooner or later, he would be overtaken by the inevitable descent of his destiny. He went through the marine world like a puppy-dog with a tin can tied to its tail, and there was nothing more killing about the whole affair than that ghastly suspense, those nerve-racking alternations of hope and despair. In the end, of course, he had to leave the Company; and he left the sea as well. You may say that he could have got a billet with another Line in a part of the world where they don't employ native crews. But his spirit was broken. He was branded—not as a coward, or a thief, or a

disgrace, but as the victim of a piece of bad luck.

"Well, gentlemen, it's getting late, and I daresay you could do with some sleep before you sail. I hope I haven't disappointed you. Did you expect a fine tale about shipwreck, or fire at sea, gales of wind, an impenetrable fog? I'm afraid you must have been bored with this yarn about nothing at all save an old book and a piece of bad luck, with no moral to point. But you can't draw a moral from luck—or destiny. And its done me a lot of good to be on board a fine ship again, yarning away like this. Good-night, gentlemen, a good voyage, and many thanks. No, don't get up. I can find my own way ashore."

And we let him go. He slipped away as though fulfilling that threat of impermanence which had impressed me earlier; and we were left in a kind of waking trance woven by the flow of his words and the tranquil tones of his gentle old voice. I suppose some of us had the common politeness to wish him good-night; but I, personally, have no recollection of any sound, of any movement, having occurred in that cabin from the time he stopped speaking and disappeared through the door, until I perceived the head of an embarrassed cadet peering round the curtain. How long that youth had been standing there I can't say. Presumably he had knocked, and none of us had heard him. The old man might have been gone some minutes or only a few seconds. There was no trace of him but his empty glass on the table, and the faintly disturbing memory of that tale of bad luck and failure.

That apprentice, fidgeting in the doorway, brought me back to my senses by announcing in the rasping tones of adolescence: "The Chief's compliments, sir, and he would like to speak to Mr Chester." I remember stumbling down the alley-way and trying to think what on earth Paisley could want to see me about; and I remember wondering if I was drunk or sober when I found him in his cabin with a whitish face, pouring out a stiff peg of whisky.

"Come in, Chester, come in," he said. "Sorry to bother you with business at this time of night. Have a drink first." He reached for another glass from the rack, and I saw that his hands were shaking.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" I asked. "You look as if you'd had a bit of a knock."

"A bit of a knock?" he repeated, staring at me. "Yes, I've had a bit of a knock, Chester. I've seen a ghost. Did I ever tell you about Erskine, who was with me in the old *Samarang*? He had to leave the Company—you may have heard the yarn. I hadn't seen him for years—heard he was dead. But, by God, I've just passed him on the gangway and he wouldn't even look at me."

THE EDUCATION PROPER TO A YOUNG LADY OF LEISURE.

BY X.

By 'young lady' I do not mean the teashop 'young lady' or the office 'young lady,' but the young lady so exquisitely represented by Trollope in Violet Effingham and Lily Dale—the Victorian ideal of a young lady—charming, cultivated, and unconventional. From the middle of the nineteenth century a welter of educational reform has spread over England. The ideal of these reformers (whether Christian or agnostic) was founded on a fallacy—the fallacy of equality. The Christian mistook the equality of souls before the infinity of God with the equality of beings in this temporal world: both expected that by education they could provide equal opportunities for all.

At this date it is possible to perceive that science and experience deride the idea of equality, but the nineteenth century was still too near to the chimeras of the French Revolution. Equality soon came to mean similarity. Men and women—gently born and lowly born—all were equal, and their needs were therefore identical. The result of this confusion of ideas has been to produce in the lower classes a desire for slavish imitation of what they consider the attributes of ladies and gentlemen, in the upper, an equal desire to rid themselves of their proper characteristics. It is as if the cart-horse wished to caracole in Rotten Row, and the racer, ashamed of his swiftness, wished to do the same. In the end an animal was produced which could only draw the station cab. Everywhere there is a tendency for a standardised girl to appear. The ideal of Miss 1929 seems to be the office girl who plays hockey—a sort of person who is of no special value to the community. All over England and the Colonies is the need for the girl who can fulfil the high duties of domestic life, who can cook and clean and sew; she is looked for in vain. Instead we are offered the woman who can type, the woman who is actually injuring her country by helping to swell the ranks of the unemployed men. There are thousands of men who could do this work, which when done is of no vital importance.

The office girl who can play hockey is as unfitted to perform the duties of the cultivated lady as she is to perform the duties of the home. The danger to the community of the disappearance of the lady of leisure is the more insidious in that it is not easily perceived. Everybody talks of

the shortage of cooks. They should also talk of the shortage of ladies.

If you speak to schoolmasters and mistresses they always say how rare it is to come across a cultivated home. A man of science who had a great deal to do with students said they none of them understood any literary allusions. The level of our newspapers and popular magazines shows how little intelligence is expected of the reader. Let us take an example. In a magazine article on children's books, the author wrote as one of a superior mind commenting with amusement on the odd taste of our forbears, lumping together Miss Edgeworth and Susan Weatherall as contemporaries, and unable to perceive any difference between the masterpieces of the one and the sentimental inanities of the other. In articles on the modern girl, her grandmother is frequently described as given to fainting and playing on the harpsichord, the probability being that she is a former Girton student, who is busy all day with committees.

For the education improper to the lady of leisure began a long time ago; the pioneers are old people now. That there was much in the old-fashioned education of women to deplore must certainly have been true. There must have been many silly, vapid girls, and many good and clever ones who felt they had not sufficient outlet for their energies. But let us look for the best of the girls of the early Victorian day. Charlotte Yonge tells us that she drew her characters truly, from the people she actually knew, and the erudition of her young ladies is amazing. How splendid they would have been at crossword puzzles; but 'Torquemada' would have had to be more particular about his definitions. In reading memoirs and letters of the period one often comes across Miss Yonge's ladies. What a sense of duty they had, as well as their cultivation, and what an admirable part they played in life. How terribly they are needed now.

The aim of education should not be, of course, to produce people of extraordinary intellectual capacity; at every period there will be some, and at no period will there be many. Education should not, however, seek to destroy them, as it is doing at present. The two great means employed to that end are games, and a multiplicity of occupations. A very discerning French critic, Lucien Dubech, says: "La soif de d'activité physique tombait à l'instant précis où l'activité intellectuelle baissait de prix; où l'instruction obligatoire conduisait en vulgarisant la connaissance, à diminuer son prestige. Anti-intellectualisme est un mot barbare: il désigne un état barbare qui est celui de notre temps."

If the proletariat slavishly imitate the upper classes, so equally do women slavishly imitate men. Girls' schools are now nearly as swamped

with athletics as boys', and the headmistress has now as great a dread of leisure as the headmaster. There must not be a spare moment: the girl is listening to lectures on Giotto, Crystals, the League of Nations, or Wild Borneo. She is rehearsing a play, she is going in for a swimming competition. There is the great hockey match. She is working for a school charity; there is the school picnic and a concert to go to, and oh—by the way—there are lots of lessons to get in. Even boys are tired out with the multiplicity of things they have to do; but they are naturally prone to get out of what they don't care for, so they slip through pretty well. But the average schoolgirl is much more conscientious, and with all these multifarious interests, what time is there for the vital necessity—training the mind.

Everyone tries to evade a real mental effort; it is so disagreeable, and to do a great number of things is the nicest way of evading, because one feels busy and good all the time.

I do not suppose that the people who invented the old high-school curriculum saw what harm they were doing to English culture. They thought they were bringing light to the ignorant when they packed a morning with snippets of Algebra and Physics, Latin and Euclid and Botany, not omitting French and German and Scripture and History and Grammar and Literature. They did not see that to know a very little of a number of things teaches much less than to know one thing well. The beginner at Italian thinks how easy it is. Only when she continues will she get any intellectual training from it.

We have found out now what the education of the young lady of leisure should *not* be. There should be few subjects taught, and those very thoroughly; games should be regarded as unimportant; and there should be plenty of free time for the girl to dispose of as she wishes. What, no lectures or concerts or matches or dramatic entertainments? Well, very few, for dulness is such a valuable educator. The girl is to be prepared for life: she is not simply to be a successful and happy schoolgirl. If she does not learn in her youth to use leisure, she will become one of the women who cannot live without bridge or golf.

Many of the girls who come from the homes where there existed a tradition of cultivation must now go out and earn their living, and many of those who can afford to stay at home have no tradition at all. What a great task, then, the schools have before them to preserve, in as far as is possible, the treasure that has been handed down to us.

The things that are essential for the education of a lady, I should say, were these, irrespective of the three R's—

First—Scripture. No girl, whatever the beliefs of her parents, can be called educated who has not a good knowledge of the Bible, but the children of many professing Christians are shamefully ignorant of it, unworthy as they are of the privilege of religious belief.

Second—English and continental history.

Third—Geography.

Fourth—French studied thoroughly, both grammar and literature.

Fifth—Class singing. Even those who have poor voices should attend, to learn rhythm, and get to know the good music which it is essential should be studied.

Sixth—Learning poetry by heart.

Seventh—Sewing. During the sewing good books like Boswell's 'Johnson,' Scott's novels, or 'Sir Roger de Coverley' should be read aloud, so that the girl may be trained in the difficult art of listening.

Eighth—Cooking.

Ninth—Dancing. There should be practising for the dancing class as well as the one lesson a week.

Tenth—Riding for all those who could afford it, swimming for those who cannot, to teach courage and endurance.

Eleventh—English essays. Sometimes at the sewing a scientific book might be read, and ancient history. These books would suggest subjects for essays.

Twelfth—As many girls as possible should be encouraged to learn music. How nice it would be if girls would learn the lute and the virginal instead of always the piano.

In leisure time there should certainly be outdoor games, if only they could be played without the idea of moral improvement. There should be one dramatic performance, and that really well done. There should be a carefully selected library, and the girls who did not care for reading should be encouraged in making things, and in painting. But I do not think there is time for any serious study of Art. The moral training should not be given through games, where a girl does what she likes before an admiring crowd, but in teaching her to do well what she does not like, with no applause except from her own conscience.

The duties of leading her generation in cultivation in manners, in independence of mind, should fall upon the lady of leisure. Let us see to it, then, that her training is hard.

THE FISH THAT RAN UNDER THE BRIDGE.

BY CLIVE VIVIAN.

"If you want to get salmon go to Galway!"

That is what I had repeatedly heard from men who had experience of Irish fishing.

Generally they would follow up the remark by telling of the marvellous sight to be seen looking over Galway Bridge.

"You can see the salmon lying there," they would say, "packed as tight as sardines in a tin!"

Having had several rather poor seasons' fishing in Scotland I decided to try it, and installed myself accordingly in the local hotel with the necessary licences and permits for a week's fishing on the Galway River.

My gillie, one of the accredited gillies of this water, was a soft-tongued old Irishman called Paddy, and together we were crossing Galway Bridge preparatory to starting the first day's fishing. Needless to say, the flies I had brought were pronounced to be no good, and Paddy had supplied me with some local ones, remarking tersely, "Them floies is no good here, these is the best floies for this plaace!" Doubtless he was right. In any case, there would be plenty of time to try my own flies when his had failed.

We stopped and looked over the bridge. Sure enough a dozen fish were lying there in the deep drain as they call it, which runs under the second arch from the right bank. As one stared into the river more and more fish began to show up. Wherever there was three foot of water or more, there salmon were lying.

It was certainly an inspiring sight, and I was all energy to reduce this fishy overcrowding.

"Well, where had I better start, Paddy?" I said.

"I'm thinking, yer honour, ye'd better fish the Weir pool; ye'll be the only rod on it to-day, and ye ought to git fish."

"Are they taking the fly well these days?" I asked him.

"Well, no, sorr, not too well, but there was wan cot on the floy here yisterday, and siveral last week. The wind's a bit northerly to-day though, and I don't like the looks of it, and the waater's terrible low. Yisterday the river fell about three inches, and that started the fish runnin'. I seen 'em last evenin'. They was runnin' like mad, and leppin' up the ladder like cats. I seen wan shtand up on his tail on a dry shtone by the weir there, like a puppy dog beggin', afore he fell back in the river. Ye'd niver belave it!"

"There's fish now!" he said, pointing to a fin which

broke surface, taking a zigzag course up the river. "Shure, he's a runner."

Paddy took me up along the bank to a spot about twenty yards below the weir.

"Start fishin' here now, sorr," he said. "There's a grand pool just below ye, and ye can fish the bank right down to the arch."

I commenced my labours, enjoying to the full the delight of wielding a salmon rod for the first time in the season, for this is a pleasure in itself quite apart from the anticipation of hooking a fish. But in this case the zest of fishing was added to by the fact that one knew that almost every cast was covering a salmon.

Not only was there the occasional jump of a fish rising in a pool, and now and then the show of a fin travelling up in the shallows, but as the fast river twisted and burbled one could catch glimpses from the bank of black streaks, which seemed to form and dissolve, and which one knew were salmon. To Paddy the river appeared to be quite transparent.

"There's a fish there now," he would say, pointing, "and there's another wan by that shtone!" and so on.

Generally I could see nothing. From time to time there was a dark or a light patch in the direction in which he pointed; it might have been a fish, or it might not! At any rate there were fish there, and plenty of them. "Hundreds on 'em!" as Paddy put it.

I fished for an hour, but got no rise. We changed the flies for smaller ones, for, as Paddy observed, "The fish is goin' up, but the water's goin' down!"

I tried the pool down a second time. No result. But fishing is a game of patience. One may fish all day without a rise, and then suddenly something has changed, and the fish begin to take!

"Where ought we to go now?" I said when I had once more reached the arch and never had a touch or rise.

"Shure, I'd try it wanst again!" said Paddy. "The wind's shifted a bit now, and we moight have luck."

I tried it down again. "If ye git e'er a pull," said Paddy, "hit him hard, sorr. The spring fish have tough mouths, and ye must strike moighty hard to be shure of 'em."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when, just at the end of the cast, I felt my line tighten, and struck.

I had him; but there was no wild rush as I had anticipated, only the solemn dead weight of a heavy fish, lying still, and hardly realising yet that he was hooked.

"You're in him!" said Paddy. "Well done, sorr; walk down to him now, kape your rod up, sorr!" as the fish gave a big pull and was away down-stream.

I didn't care about these instructions, preferring to handle my fish in my own way, and

lose him if I deserved to. Still this was no time for explanations, so I said nothing. After all, as Paddy said himself, when, on a later occasion, a brother fisherman on the bank started giving advice, "Shure, play him your own way, sorr, but listen to him to plaze him!"

I followed the fish down, letting him run out line as he wanted it. Presently he was away across the river in the shallows the other side, and now swimming towards me and slackening the line.

"Reel in quickly, sorr; get up-stream of him. If he gits the line slack, and he up-stream of ye, it'll be round a shtone and he'll break ye!"

There was a good path at the side of the river, and it was easy to move up and down. I travelled up as fast as I could, reeling like mad, and breathing a sigh of relief when the line tautened again, straight from me to the fish, who was lying away in the shallows across the river, and a little below me.

Presently he was off again up-river, then turning, came straight towards me into the deeps. I reeled again, and moved down-stream to get a pull on him from below, for a fish that has to fight both the stream and the pull of the line is quickly spent.

"Keep above him, for the love of God!" said Paddy. "If he gets into the shallows there, he'll cut you on the stones."

I did as bidden, shortening line until I was abreast of the fish, and keeping a heavy strain on him. Just then he jumped, showing all his magnificent silvery length.

"He must be thirty pounds," muttered Paddy. "Begorrah, that's a foine fish, sorr!"

The fish thought it was time he was doing something, and with a wild flick of his tail turned and was away down-stream.

The reel sang as he took line, and I followed more slowly on the bank. I was now about half-way between the weir and the bridge, the latter a hundred yards below me. The run stopped when he was some twenty yards above the arch.

"Get down to him now," said Paddy, "and put a heavy pull on him."

I held him for all I was worth, and gradually reeled him up-stream. Then suddenly he was away over the shallows, and repeated his first manœuvre. Patiently I reeled him in until he was once more abreast of me in deep water, when—whizz!—he was off again with the bit between his teeth, and rushing down-stream like a railway train.

This time he stopped only a few yards above the bridge.

"Pull him hard now," said Paddy, "or he'll be under the bridge; get down to him, sorr."

Paddy's voice was louder and higher pitched. He spoke more quickly, betraying excitement. Doubtless he foresaw intricate

events of which I had no inkling.

I pulled him as hard as I dared, reeling in line, and moving slowly down the bank. The fish was hovering just above the bridge, making little rushes down-stream. Now he was in the swiftest current of the drain, and do what I could, short of inviting a break, he was too much for me, and little by little he went through the arch.

"Willie!" shouted Paddy; "Willie!"

A long figure shot past us with some unintelligible answer. It was Willie with a gaff in his hand.

Presently a voice from the bridge was heard. "He's got the short gaff," it shouted. "The long wan's down the reach by the telegraph poles."

What did they want the long gaff for, I wondered? Surely these barbarians were not going to spike my fish from the bridge in mid-stream?

I glanced up at the speaker and noticed, to my surprise, that the bridge was now crowded with spectators, all leaning over the parapet and peering down at where my fish had just disappeared under the arch.

Half Galway seemed to have come to see the fun.

"Help Willie, you there Matthew John," shouted Paddy.

"Shure, of course," floated down from the bridge, and at the same moment my fish gave a twist down-stream, and the line ran singing out in spite of all I could do.

"Keep it in the middle of the arch," said Paddy; "steady now."

I had only the vaguest idea of what was going on. Paddy seemed to have taken charge, the fish was below the bridge, and I was above it. There seemed little prospect of getting him back against that swift and surging current.

"Can I go through after him?" I asked Paddy, wondering if by any chance it was shallow enough.

"Shure, then, is it to drown yerself ye want, sorr? There's no man living could walk down that current. Take it aisy now, kape the line in the middle of the arch if ye can. Willie'll get him down below!"

Presently there was a chorus of shouts from the bridge. "Willie's got him," they were saying.

"Slacken yer rod now," said Paddy.

Realising that I was no longer playing the fish I did so. Paddy seized the line above the point of the rod, and began pulling it out as fast as he could, the slack disappearing down-stream. When we got to the end of the backing, "Cut it now," said Paddy, and pulling out his knife, cut it himself. The end flew through the rings, and my rod became lineless.

"Come on now with me, sorr," said Paddy. "Give me the rod!" and suiting the action to the word, he seized my rod and started running down the bank. When we got to the

end of the bank we had to dip under the bridge, following a little wooden platform built round underneath the innermost arch. On its other side the bank broadened out into a garden. A low wooden gangway was built out here from the stone bridge, forming a second but slightly lower bridge over the river, and giving access to some curious-looking wooden structures in the water which I learnt afterwards were eel-boxes.

On this lower bridge were Willie and Matthew John. Willie was playing the fish by hand, and had, I was pleased to see, a taut line. I sincerely hoped it *was* my fish, and not a rock holding the line taut, as it stretched away far below in what looked like shallows.

Matthew John had a coil of line in his hand. "Give here the rod!" he shouted, and Paddy gave it. Between them they threaded the end of the line through the rings from the top joint down to the butt. Dexterously connecting up to the reel, Paddy started reeling up the slack line.

"Have you him still?" he shouted as the last of the slack came in.

"I have," said Willie, "but I had the divil's own job to hook the line with the short gaff, and I lost me fly-book in the river whilst I was fishing for it."

"Ah, niver mind the floy-book!" said Paddy, handing me the rod. "There ye are now, sorr," he said. "God be thanked he's still at the end of it." I took the rod, and felt the fish pulling well downstream.

"Walk down the bank to him, sorr; he'll be well down below now."

I worked my way down, and the fight went on.

The rest of the story is quickly told. Having made the great bid for liberty, and having been defeated by the wiles of these cunning old gillies, my salmon had shot his bolt, and ten minutes later Paddy gaffed him from a little beach about a hundred yards below the bridge.

Twenty-nine pounds he scaled, and a good fighter at that.

"Begorrah, I thought ye had him lost!" said Paddy, "when I see'd him go down under the arch. That's the way we always trate 'em when they run that way, but 'tis not often we gits 'em!"

Willie came up and congratulated me. "That's a foine fish, sorr," he said.

"Thanks to you and your help," I replied.

"It was a costly one, though," he added with a wry smile. "I lost me fly-book in the river."

"Ah, well," I felt bound to say, "I'll make it good to you!"

"Ah no, indeed, sorr, it was no fault of yours!" said Willie.

Just then, peering into the river, a glint of sunlight illumined the shallows, and in mid-stream I saw a black shape lie still for a moment, then

drift a foot or so down-stream, and come to rest against a stone.

"I believe that's your fly-book!" I said.

"Shure, I belave you're right," said Paddy; "it's somethin', anyway."

"If it is, it's a holy miracle!" said Willie.

"Lend me the rod, sorr," said Matthew John, coming up at the moment; and taking a bit of lead out of his pocket, and fastening it on the cast, took off the fly and attached a large hook, then getting abreast of the spot where we thought we saw the fly-book, he started to cast across it. His skill was unerring; after four or five casts he had hooked it. Reeling in carefully, Willie retrieved it in a landing-net. Sure enough it was the fly-book. Willie was delighted.

"'Twas a good thing ye saw it, sorr," he said. "I had twelve pounds worth o' tackle in that fly-book. I would have been mighty sorry to have lost it!"

"Two good fish on one day; that's something, anyway!" said Paddy.

"Yes," I said, "one of twenty-nine and one of twelve pounds. Not so bad."

"Begorrah, I'd sooner have the twelve-pounder than the big wan this toime!" said Matthew John with a chuckle.

"We nigh lost the two av 'em along a you lavin' the big gaff down by the tilegraph raach, you old sinner!" said Paddy.

"Never mind," I said rather tritely, distributing a ration of blood money. "All's well that ends well."

It had certainly been a new experience for me, and not without its tense moments. And that was how, aided by Paddy, Willie and Matthew John, I caught my first salmon in the Galway River!

LITTLE HOUSES: A COMMENT.

BY LADY ROBERTSON.

ALL about the English countryside there are to be found little houses, generally long and low, of a type that comes into no especial category of architecture but that made good homes. William and Adelaide rather than William and Mary, they have not the distinction of earlier building, but they have a quality of inconspicuous pleasantness. A certain genius for living produced them. Parsonage, small manor house, or the nondescript house on the outskirts of a village, they were built when space was less valuable than it is now, and they have a modest roominess.

They are usually stone, or are painted or washed buff or white. They are not often grey; and while grey harled houses in Scotland look entirely right, grey rough-cast in England is not so successful, one does not quite know why. Nor are they often brick, have you noticed that? Good brick houses are either earlier or are of quite recent date. There are some good new ones.

These houses, and additions to older houses, were not copied from earlier plans. The rooms may be low, but they have not the square high windows nor the beams of the rare small Jacobean house, and they have not the formal façade of a Georgian house, nor do they attain to the dignity it achieved, however small it might be. Their good quality is an unpretentious comfortableness. The spacing of the windows is often irregular—as, for the matter of that, is the spacing of the windows in the Doge's Palace in Venice and of many charming houses in Italy and Spain. The front door may be at one end or in the centre, or round the corner. It was placed where it happened to be most convenient for the interior planning.

On the garden front of a little stone house of this description in Wales there are nine windows in the main block, and of these only two match, yet the balance is right. There is no straining after any hard and fast standard of correctness. Use and comfort dictated the plan, and if they failed of the complete beauty of the earlier houses, they managed by some happy chance, possibly lack of means, to miss that Victorian pomposity which demanded lofty rooms and trimmings where circumstances did not warrant them, and which mistook size and portliness for beauty—the taste that preferred a monkey-puzzle to a gnarled apple-tree, and whose forbidding front doors were all boot-scraper and door-knocker.

The grained or bluish-green doors of these little houses stand open in a welcoming way, and a garden tool or so leans up against them.

Inside, too, the rooms are not particularly beautiful: often occupied by grandmothers, their drawing-rooms, with an air of faded elegance, may be slightly prim, but beyond a threadbare baize door there is sure to be some shabby old sitting-room or schoolroom tucked away where you may be completely at your ease.

The staircases are sometimes rather poor, and the floors are not often of oak, but they have that old kind of polish that was not smeared on, stain and varnish together out of a tin labelled 'Oak,' that so soon wears through and looks shoddy, but was done in three separate processes of size, stain, and polish, lasting for years, improving indeed with age and acquiring almost as good a quality of surface as an oak floor has. The passages upstairs and the backstairs were often merely scrubbed boards—and how nice they are. Good old grates have nearly always been sacrificed for newer types, too often surrounded by hideous tiles; but here and there a pretty old hob grate with the two semicircles may have escaped, very likely in a bathroom, from which it was not worth while to oust it, for the bathroom is probably a converted dressing-room, and is a much more interesting and amusing place than the 8 feet by 6 feet tiled bathroom specially planned in a modern small house. It contains several pieces of furniture, a pile of old 'Illustrated London News' perhaps, and an entrancing variety of pictures on its walls. The fire has not been lit, but you have the comfortable feeling that on a cold day it might be. Best of all, the bedroom windows may have the great merit of reaching nearly to the floor, allowing the infrequent pleasure of seeing the garden from one's bed, and perhaps of being able to look into a tree near-by and watch the nuthatch going up and downstairs in his business-like way, and to hear the little tinkle of the blue-tit's fairy bell.

The gardens that belonged to these houses were as haphazard as they. They cannot for a moment be compared to those lovely gardens that form part of a beautiful architectural whole—but they had a charm. Small modern gardens, though laid out after good designs, are sometimes apt to be a little dull. You know to the last stone of crazy paving exactly what they are going to be. The careless garden spirit has departed. Here all was an adventure. There would perhaps be several little lawns, none of them large enough to be good for any but the feebler sort of game. They made only a very half-hearted attempt to be level, and sloped

upwards to a wall, or downwards to a shrubbery, in a most unformal manner. The shrubbery was not of that extensive variety in which Jane Austen's young ladies took their morning airing. All shrubberies are bad, but it is dismal even to think of shrubberies large enough to go for a walk in, and one can only hope that a very moderate amount of exercise contented them. No, these were more of the kind that sheltered the dogs' graves (so tragically dug, so completely forgotten), in whose black hearts lurked a potting-shed with the lawn-mower and garden roller, and on whose edges were the unproductive little gardens of the children. Sometimes there were dim green arbours and sometimes there were cut-out beds on the lawn—the pride of the gardener's heart; occasionally there were unlovely excrescences, covered with ivy and topped with scarlet geraniums. Other bad features were asphalte paths and wire or rustic arches. But the narrow borders — not herbaceous borders in the modern sense—were filled with flowers, and you were safe to find a lemon-scented verbena against a sheltered wall, or even the old double white clematis with plumy flowers, like little ostrich feathers. Mignonette, which will not grow for everyone, flourished here, perhaps alongside a large bush of moss roses, the delight of every child, and here also grew the old pink and crimson damask roses with whose heart-breaking sweetness no modern rose can compare.

They are lucky who hold in the memories of their childhood some such home. Children from big houses liked the intimacy, and, in winter, the warm, lit cheerfulness; town-bred children enjoyed the space and freedom; and the roving children of soldiers were happy in finding one place in the world where nothing was ever altered. Even their own gardens were kept for them, and their first action on arrival was always to rush and see what plants had survived their absence. To this day they can remember exactly where each plant grew and each piece of furniture stood, and they could lay an unerring hand on the bird-seed or the china box which always contained black-currant lozenges. There was a security, a continuity about that country life that has vanished now. Everyone knew everyone. They may not have thought very highly of each other—neighbours don't always—but they stood by each other. Nobody much liked Jenkins, but when his pig died and he sent the hat round, the money for another was soon forthcoming as he could not be left in the lurch. And when the vicar's wife had to have a serious operation, the Easter Offering swelled to enormous proportions. The church—how clearly it comes back: two old dusty hatchments, brown with age, high

up on one wall; the school children fidgeting below on the other side; and the old Miss Taylors, tall gaunt aunt in a large bonnet, and small compact niece in a small bonnet, singing very emphatically, their old heads wagging, 'With its 'witching pleasures does the vain world charm.' But what vain whispers ever disturbed the shining peace of that quiet place?

Harassed householders to-day demand the convenience of labour-saving homes, but space in them is so limited, possessions have to be so ruthlessly cut down, so many treasures scrapped, that unless they take care, surely they may find that they have emptied out the baby with the bath.

I passed a little house not long ago standing derelict, the dead leaves blown up against its threshold. It has too many rooms and is too rambling, they said, and it will probably never be lived in again. Much the same story was told of a rectory in another village. Several generations of families have grown up and gone out into the world from it. But to-day it is difficult to get anyone to take the living. The little houses, it seems, are now too large.

DOROTHY ROBERTSON.

RUMFY.

BY VIVIAN GORDON.

II. "ROOT, HOG, OR DIE!"

WHEN we are children we are apt to imagine that wonderful things must lie hidden in any room or place to which we are denied entry. We are not really much different from this when we are grown up; and as entry into the interior of New Guinea was barred by dense trackless forests, impenetrable fever-smitten mangrove swamps, and bloodthirsty savages, the public of the day were eager to believe all sorts of fantastic tales concerning it. Not only were rhinoceros, buffaloes, boa-constrictors, and cannibals said to exist there, but also gigantic birds with a twenty-foot wingspread, and pygmies and men with tails; not only did the country produce yams and coconuts and sago and breadfruit, but also nutmeg and spices and ebony and cedar—the greater part of all of which have never yet been found there. And what made it all the more fascinating to the people of Australia was that this land of fear and mystery lay almost at their doors.

So it happened that, when the news came through that Britain had established a protectorate over the south-eastern portion of New Guinea, enthusiasm was added to interest, and that a great Australian newspaper promptly decided to send an exploring expedition up there, and that another great Australian newspaper evolved the identical idea almost immediately afterwards, and that both of these expeditions were despatched by the *Siam*, on which Reginald Pott was travelling.

The 'Era's' party was in the charge of a man of studious habits named Calvert, while the 'Outlook's' was commanded by a man of varied attainments, possessing much worldly sagacity and a considerable experience of blacks and 'bushwhacking,' named Condie. Fogarty called them "the antiseptic twins." Naturally, as soon as the other passengers realised that they were being eye-witnesses to the start of a race for New Guinea over which the whole newspaper-reading public of Australia was already agog, they pricked up their ears and started in to liven things up with bets and banter. Calvert, however, was not to be jockeyed out of his quiet ways; but Condie gave back all the banter with interest, and took on all the bets he could get against his report of his arrival in New Guinea being the first to get

published. And as Condie's party played up staunchly to their leader, and Calvert's fellows did their best to make up for their chief's quietness, a very genial atmosphere quickly developed, so that that trip of the *Siam* proved one of the liveliest in her long experience. The evening before their arrival at each coast-port witnessed cheery dinners of farewell to departing travellers in which all of the passengers participated, and folks from the shore coming aboard to meet their friends felt a chilling consciousness of extreme sobriety come over them at contact with the atmosphere of boisterous geniality into which they found themselves suddenly entering. And a feature that was noticeable in all farewells to Captain M'Nab was the injunction that he should be sure to drop that fellow Condie overboard somewhere up the coast, but on no account later than the Albany Pass.

In spite of a naturally quiet nature and a feeling of diffidence on finding himself dumped suddenly amongst a company of men of the open world, our young friend Reginald was inevitably drawn with the rest into the general atmosphere of conviviality. Fortunately for himself, however, he did not get carried away by it, but rather sat back and participated passively in a daze of pleasant wonderment at the friendly manner of his initiation into Life.

Then, the day before they reached Cooktown, came the shock of learning that his brother Marmaduke, with whom he was to trade in partnership, had been thrown ashore at Sydney as a hopeless inebriate, and that most of his patrimony was gone and all his plans and high hopes irretrievably shattered. That night he did *not* participate in the farewell dinner to the Cooktown passengers, but hung over the after rail dejectedly watching, through the dark, the glowing white of the ship's wake as it swirled away from beneath her stern; and he felt as if that turmoil of white whirling water that fled away from under him into the vast darkness carried with it all his glowing aspirations and all his new-found zest in life.

And then, the dinner being over, Fogarty happened to pass along the deck and saw him there, and, some kindly instinct telling him that the lad was in trouble, he haled him gently along to his little cabin, where he plied him with food and sympathy until he had learnt the whole unfortunate story. Whereupon he looked silently at Reginald for some minutes with a comic doleful kindliness in his gaze, until suddenly a smile broke through the gloom of his face, and he remarked cheerfully, "Be the powers! it's real lucky ye are that your brother is not waitin' at Thursday Island for ye, for then he'd have skinned ye of

all the rest of your money, and ye'd have had him on your hands to feed and keep into the bargain."

Reginald looked up at him incredulously. "Do you think that?" he asked with a glint of returning interest in his eyes.

"I'm not thinkin' it," returned Fogarty with a conviction that was infectious, "I know it. Do you think, young feller, that if your brother was there, pleadin' and promisin', ye could refuse him, or that ye could cure him from drinkin' and laziness? Ye could no more have saved your brother nor your money than ye could stop the south-east monsoon. And it's me that's tellin' ye who've seen dozens like him.

"No, Mr Pott, if ye'd like to try an' help your brother in spite of what he's done to ye, ye cannot do better than write a note from Cooktown to your parson friend what saw ye off, askin' him to try an' find the young devil an' put some hobbles on him. He knows more about the reformin' business than what you do, and—savin' your pardon, for family sentiment is a very unbalancin' thing—he'll be less likely to be made a mug of while doin' it.

"But for yourself — why, man, can't ye see your luck's dead in, for now ye've a clear field an' everything before ye?"

Reginald raised his head and gazed at the gaunt Irishman in wonderment. A moment ago he had felt himself the crushed and hopeless victim of a treacherous fortune, and now here was Fogarty seriously contending that, as a matter of fact, fortune had favoured him. Admittedly the alluring idea of the joint trading venture had been destroyed, but then it was clear now that this had been nothing but a hoax of Marmaduke's from the start. On the other hand, it was unquestionable that Marmaduke, as the drunken loafer that he was now proved, would have been an impossible partner in any business venture, and, in fact, nothing less than an incubus; and of this incubus he was now freed. As to any hope of reforming him, he had never had any influence over his brother, and was quite willing to accept Fogarty's view that Mr Simpson would be a much better hand at this class of work. Moreover, if he were to return to Sydney now he would be without a job, and therefore not in a position to help anybody. He had, indeed, lost most of his patrimony, but this was an asset of which he had never really been very conscious, for it was all in State bonds, bringing him in a few pounds twice a year, which he simply left in the bank. But he was on the threshold of the open world, the world to which belonged all these cheery, active, independent men around him; and, as Fogarty said, he had now a clear field before him. What that field contained—

whether rough going or smooth, success or failure—was hidden from him; but having just cast off the fetters of slavish routine and attuned himself to breathe the air of freedom and high hope, his whole nature rebelled against the thought of returning tamely to the shackles of humdrum city life. "Conquer fortune with endurance," had said Mr Simpson. In his present frame of mind this seemed a rather passive sort of motto, but at any rate, pending his discovery of a better one, he was prepared to accept the first half of it. 'Conquer fortune,' then, should be the watchword. He had still a few pounds left, and a considerable amount of hope and goodwill. Surely Thursday Island could offer something to a fellow who came to it with these attributes.

At this point he became conscious of Fogarty surveying him with a quaint expectant smile, so he rose and held out his hand. "Thank you, Mr Fogarty," he said simply. "I will go now."

"And what are you going to do?" asked the Irishman.

"I am going to write to Mr Simpson about Marmaduke," was the reply.

"Good enough!" and Fogarty shook his hand warmly. "And tell him—as from a man of experience,—tell him that after he's reformed the young spalpeen he should take a whiff now an' then at any water he sees him drinkin'."

The next morning they entered the Endeavour River, and came to the wharf at Cooktown. As soon as the gangway was down Reginald landed, intent on posting his letter to Mr Simpson. This involved a brisk walk to the post office, following which, finding the climate of Cooktown astonishingly hot, he relaxed his pace and strolled back at leisure, studying the town. Approaching the steamer he met Condie, whose eyes were attracted by the two slender masts of a small schooner projecting above the edge of the wharf just ahead of the *Siam*. He drew Reginald across, and looking over the side of the wharf, they beheld a trim but evidently somewhat antiquated little vessel moored there. The clean graceful lines, the central cargo hatch, and the general rig were typical of the early type of trading and pearling schooners.

"Not a bad little craft, eh?" commented Condie with evident interest. "Now if this was Thursday Island, I wouldn't mind chartering her at a pinch, though she's rather small for her age, so to speak. Name?" And he bent down to read what was painted on her bow. "Eh?" He frowned incredulously.

Reginald joined him, and together they peered down at the faded inscription. It was at an awkward angle, but nevertheless quite legible. "*Root Hog or Die*," read Condie. Reginald looked at him in blank inquiry.

"Looks like a sundowner's family motto," commented Condie. "*Root, Hog, or Die*, eh? Not so bad either, these hard-grafting days."

"But what does it mean?" asked the unsophisticated Reginald.

Condie looked at him with an air of sympathy. "Mean?" he said. "I suppose as a townie you've never made the acquaintance of a poor man's pig. But you can figure that, as his owner can't afford to feed him and doesn't leave much scraps for him to eat, he's got to root for his food or starve. That's what it means —'Root, hog, or die!' And if we get down to fundamentals, that's what most of us have to do if we don't happen to have some kind of a goose laying golden eggs for us. The man who named that boat must have been a philosopher."

At this moment voices were heard on the schooner, and out through the cabin hatch there emerged two men, the first of whom was a stranger to them, while the second was none other than Calvert. Condie raised his eyebrows.

"Hullo!" he hailed. "Going to give the old *Siam* a tow?"

Calvert looked up. "Why, no," he smiled. "I'm leaving the *Siam* here. I've chartered this schooner."

"Chartered her, eh? Do you think she'll be quicker than the *Siam?*" returned Condie with affected flippancy.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I do," replied Calvert, turning to wink quietly at a member of his party who had meantime emerged from the cabin.

Condie made a grimace indicating comprehension, and nodded grimly. "So that's the game, is it?" he said. "Out through Lark Passage and straight across to Moresby, leaving the poor old 'Outlook' party weeping and ger-nashing their teeth on the old *Siam*. Not such a bad scheme either. Have you bought any hoop-iron?"

"What for?" asked Calvert in an unguarded moment.

"Why, I think you'd be wise to strap your old boat together a bit," replied Condie seriously, "otherwise her planking may start to drop off when you get her out into the monsoon. I take it you want to carry out the first half of that name of her's and not the last."

Calvert smiled drily. "I'm afraid you're getting anxious about those bets of yours," he said. "By the way, this is the last point of the telegraph line, you know, so if you want to wire to the Townsville and Brisbane chaps and call them off you've still got time."

Condie replied, however, that he wasn't worrying about his bets but about Calvert's safety, and maintained that it deprived him of all his zest in the race to think of Calvert going and throwing himself away in a decayed old sieve of a boat just when the contest was getting interesting.

Following a little more such banter and an offer to take charge of any of the 'Era' party's last messages to their relatives, Condie walked away with Reginald to the ship. Then, to the latter's surprise, as soon as they were safely out of sight of the schooner, he punched his palm angrily with his fist and proceeded to heap invective on Calvert as a sly young schemer for stealing a march on him. Later, for Reginald's benefit, he explained that what his competitor meant to do was to sail to Port Moresby—which was the seat of the British administration of New Guinea—direct from Cooktown, passing through the Great Barrier Reef at Lark Passage. His course would give him an easy reach across the south-east trades all the way, and this fact would probably make it a quicker trip than from Thursday Island, even though it was a little longer, because more than half of the latter course would have to be taken close-hauled, in addition to which Calvert would have several days' start, as Condie had yet to secure a boat and engage a crew. Of course, it was all wrong, and an error of judgment on Calvert's part, because he certainly couldn't obtain men in Cooktown who knew anything about New Guinea, and Condie never imagined he would be so darned foolish; but—well, ass though he was, he was now pretty certain to get to New Guinea first, which meant also that he would get his initial report published first . . . unless . . ."

"Unless what?" queried Reginald, keenly interested.

But Condie simply shrugged his shoulders and smiled thoughtfully. "The only answer to that at present," he said, "is 'Root, hog!'"

Reginald, whose imagination had been to a large extent nurtured on a popular form of American sensational literature known in those days as 'penny dreadfuls,' began to picture Condie slipping over the side after dark and quietly scuppering the *Root Hog or Die* at her moorings. However, when the next morning came, the schooner, somewhat to his surprise, was still there cheerfully afloat; and Condie, lounging about the deck before breakfast in his pyjamas, could not in any way be held to convey the impression of a villain harbouring diabolical designs. So Reginald, with a sub-conscious twinge of disappointment, was fain to persuade himself that heroes in real life were obliged to adopt methods a little less crude and spectacular; and the sight of a policeman standing on the wharf and gazing idly down at the schooner added conviction to this thought. Nevertheless he found it hard to believe that the shrewd and hard-visaged Condie, the experienced bushman and man of the world, could be prepared to sit back and quietly accept defeat from a thoughtful-eyed young theorist like Calvert; so he composed

himself with much perplexity to wait and watch events.

However, the *Siam* sailed that morning on the last stage of her journey without anything having happened; and for the next two days until they reached Thursday Island his interests were absorbed by the never-ending succession of new experiences and impressions and by the scenic beauties of their route. For several days past, since they had entered the tropics and come within the shelter of the Great Barrier Reef, they had seemed to be passing through some wonderful inland sea, over clear waters that basked in glassy calmness under a sweltering sun, where continually their course took them winding amongst gem-like islands of tropical beauty. After they left Cooktown these fascinations were given an added zest by the fact that both Captain M'Nab and Fogarty appeared to lay themselves out, according to their respective lights and opportunities, to take him under their especial care. He thus, through the Captain, acquired the freedom of the bridge, which is an honour that rarely fails to flatter even the most sophisticated landsman, but which to Reginald was an experience more thrilling than a whole library of sensational fiction. And on the bridge the Captain and the officers would instruct him as to the names and uses of the innumerable mysterious instruments and appliances that he found there, until they lost their mystery to him; and he learnt to read the compass and watched the plotting of courses on the chart, and was initiated into the mariner's cryptic system of indicating the time on the ship's bell. These and countless other new things he became acquainted with under the Captain's patronage, while in the more restricted zone of Fogarty's influence he acquired merely access to the steward's friendly cabin, and to his truly enlightening lore of human observation. And, trivial as these two things may seem, he valued them no less than the Captain's favours: for there was a happy absence of restraint about Fogarty's cabin, and the solemn-visaged Irishman appeared to be something of a philosopher, so that his comments on his fellow-men led Reginald to conclude that the chief steward on a passenger steamer must have exceptional opportunities for studying human nature. And perhaps he was right.

One interesting insight into the private life of his two patrons that he gained (at the cost of some astonishment) was that in spite of their widely differing positions on the ship the pair were very good friends, even to the extent that privately 'Sandy' and 'Pat' took the place of the formal 'sorr' and 'Mr Fogarty' to which the passengers were accustomed. He came by this knowledge the afternoon before their arrival at Thursday Island, when he was waiting in the Captain's

cabin to have tea with him. On the same occasion he also came by a new name.

"And what did they call you at home?" Captain M'Nab had asked.

"Reginald," was the reply.

The Captain looked at him as one who would say, "Heavens, and I had thought you respectable." What he actually did say ultimately was, "Save us! Another yellow-backer! Lad, your mother must have been a very romantic woman."

"She liked names that sounded genteel," murmured Reginald reminiscently.

Captain M'Nab raised his eyebrows sharply and opened his mouth as if to speak, but restrained himself. "Have you any *other* names?" he asked finally.

"Humphrey," replied our young friend.

"H'm. Well, there's a bit less sugar on that one. But it's a poor rig to send a young Australian out into the world with," remarked the Captain. "It's like sending a young feller out to the back blocks in a top hat."

At this moment Fogarty entered with the tea-tray.

"Pat," said the Captain, "do you know what his young highness here calls himself at home?"

Fogarty shook his head.

"Reginald Humphrey," quoted the Captain. "Reginald Humphrey Pott. All down by the head an' makin' a wash like a liner and a wake like a ship's gig. Do you think we can let him ashore at Thursday Island with a name like that, Pat?"

With thoughtful conviction Fogarty again shook his head. "It wouldn't be really safe, Sandy," he said; "not amongst boys that goes around in names like Jim Dryneck an' Bully Colson an' Battleaxe. They'd feel like he was flashin' his townie clothes at them, an' want to get gay with him a bit."

"Have you never had a nickname?" asked M'Nab hopefully. "If not, maybe we could find you one. Pat, here, has got a poetical fancy."

"My mother never allowed nicknames," replied Reginald with artless finality.

The Captain made an expressive grimace at Fogarty. "Well, that's snouted *that*," he commented wryly. "No nicknames, eh. H'm—time you took a shot at addressin' the meeting, Pat."

"No nicknames," repeated Fogarty, shaking his head disapprovingly. "Reginald Humphrey and no——" Then, with sudden inspiration, "What about 'Rumfy'? No nickname about that. Just his own two names 'press-packed,' so to speak."

The Captain cocked his head on one side and considered it; and having concluded that it sounded friendly and comfortable, and had no starchy 'gentility' about it, the meeting decided by a two-thirds majority, with Reginald not vot-

ing, that 'Rumfy' should be the name under which he should be introduced to Thursday Island, and that his own baptismal names should henceforward be rigidly suppressed.

The following morning they steamed through the beautiful Albany Pass, and saw there on the mainland the little collection of white houses that was dignified by the name of Somerset. Emerging from the Pass, the *Siam* traversed a space of ten or fifteen miles of open water beyond which lay a picturesque group of hilly islands, which she proceeded to circumnavigate, until at last, plunging through a narrow opening into their midst, she entered a beautiful landlocked harbour. On the shores of the island on their left was spread out a little white-painted settlement of some sixteen or eighteen houses. That, said Captain M'Nab, was Thursday Island. On the other islands occasional little groups of white buildings were visible, which Reginald was told were pearling stations, and anchored in the harbour were some half-dozen schooners, which were the tenders to the pearling fleets, come to get their supplies and mails from Sydney. As they steamed past these towards the hulk alongside which they were to moor, a gleaming black object shot out of the fo'c'sle hatch of a schooner and fell on the surface of the water, where it bobbed in cheerful company with one or two others that were already floating there.

"What are those?" asked Reginald innocently.

"Gin bottles," was the Captain's reply. "Didn't anybody ever tell you a yarn about a stream of gin bottles that floats away from Thursday Island and down the Albany Pass? Well, there it is—three of them, anyway."

He then went on to explain that whenever the pearling boats came in to Thursday Island, and superlatively so when the entire fleets came in at Christmas and New Year, the crews settled down to have "a real good drunk." This frequently lasted the better part of a week, the diet on which it was reared being 'squareface' gin; and as a result of these orgies the island had acquired an undeserved notoriety which even led flippant people into mutilating its name into one that suggested a constant desire for drink.

"So it is not the inhabitants themselves that are the drunkards?" asked Reginald, feeling the misgivings sown by Jim Biggs already much alleviated.

"Oh no," replied M'Nab reassuringly, with a wink at Condie. "On the contrary, they're often quite sober."

On the hulk a number of barefooted 'blackboys' were waiting to handle the cargo, while by the after deck-house a little knot of white men stood talking, and, as the *Siam* tied up, a further small party was rowed alongside in a smart white gig. As soon as the ship

was made fast all these men were aboard; pearlers chiefly, coming for their goods and mails, but amongst them was a man with a fierce black beard, who promptly disappeared into the Captain's cabin, and a big red-faced man who, with equal readiness, dived down below to Fogarty's sanctum. These were respectively Mr Burton and Tim O'Keefe, the former being the manager of John Bruce & Co.'s local branch that operated the only store on the island, and from its unpretentious corrugated iron precincts practically controlled all the trade of Torres Straits and New Guinea, while the latter was the shrewd and genial proprietor of O'Keefe's Hotel.

Mr Burton being, amongst other things, the ship's agent, had, of course, first of all that mysterious business to transact in the Captain's cabin that agents always have, and regarding which all that we can state for certain is that it generally involves the production and use of a bottle and two glasses. As soon as this rite had been satisfied, Condie succeeded in seeking Mr Burton out, and the rite was then cheerfully re-enacted with the aid of a third glass, while Condie explained his business and plans, and made it clear to Mr Burton that he required immediately a good schooner and an efficient crew, headed by a skipper who was thoroughly familiar with the New Guinea coast and well versed in the ways of the New Guinea natives.

Mr Burton assured him at once that he anticipated no difficulty in filling the latter part of his requirements, as, given a few days' time, you could always pick up a crew around the islands; and for a skipper he had that morning seen the very man for him—namely, Joe Ringcross, a half-caste Samoan, who was a thoroughly capable fellow, and probably knew the islands and the New Guinea coast better than any one. But a schooner—he shook his head with conviction,—he didn't know of a schooner available anywhere around the Straits. The pearling season had just begun again, and all the pearling vessels were busy, and several trading schooners had gone out with the turn of the monsoon. If it had been a month ago, now, there was a schooner—a bit old, but good enough for coasting work,—but her owner had got tired waiting for a buyer here, so had sent her to Cooktown hoping to catch a chump down there.

"What was her name?" asked Condie.

"The *Root Hog or Die.*"

"H'm. She's caught her chump all right," said Condie, and then went on to tell of the rival expedition despatched by the 'Era' under Calvert's leadership, and how they had chartered the *Root Hog or Die* to take them direct across to Port Moresby. He quite appreciated, he said, that their

schooner might fall to pieces when she got outside the reef; but if she didn't there was a considerable risk that he, the old hand, might be beaten to the post by a raw youngster, which Mr Burton would readily recognise as unthinkable.

Mr Burton, whose sporting instincts were much stimulated at the idea of this contest, fully concurred in the unthinkableness of the older hand succumbing to a greenhorn, but nevertheless protested his inability to coax schooners out of thin air. However, he would keep his eyes and ears open; and meantime, as all the pearlers were now in port, and most of them at that moment on board the *Siam*, he suggested that Mr Condie would do well to see them all and make his requirements known to them.

So Condie went down to the saloon to meet the pearl-shellers, who were all busily performing the same rite with bottles and glasses; and from them he received a sympathetic and even enthusiastic hearing and many invitations to drink and lunch and dine; but when he spoke of a schooner they shook their heads with the unanimity of a trained chorus. And when he pointed out that there were six or seven schooners now in port, and that surely *one* of them might be spared for a few months, they all chuckled, and each suggested to some one else that he should help the poor fellow out, and the 'some one else' would wink and say that he wouldn't think of keeping the proposer out of such an interesting event. For, as a matter of fact, sporting fellows as they mostly were, it appealed to these pearling masters as keenly humorous that any one should suggest their diverting one of their vessels from its occupation of hauling wealth out of the sea in order to hire it out on a paltry charter to carry one of these amusing expeditions that went to New Guinea to hunt for hidden marvels and collect birds and butterflies.

Condie began to get really desperate, and betook himself on shore to make further inquiries. Meanwhile Mr Burton had been introduced to a young passenger named Rumfy Pott and told something of his story, with the ultimate result that our young friend was given immediate temporary employment supervising cargo tallies for John Bruce & Co., so that at least he might be earning a little while he looked for a more permanent billet.

So, under his new name of 'Rumfy,' he settled down wonderingly, but by no means unhappily, to his new life on the island of his dreams. And although it had all turned out so vastly different from what those dreams had pictured to him, it was all fascinatingly strange and spacious and happy-go-lucky, so that the rush of new impressions left him very little time to brood over his own misfortunes. Moreover, from what little he saw of Condie during his first few

days there, he was forced to the conclusion that his own bad luck could be as nothing compared with that of the would-be explorer in his fruitless search for a vessel, for the verve and completeness with which he cursed everything ashore and afloat from Cooktown northwards left the mild-mannered Rumfy shuddering with shock and awe.

Then he saw him a couple of times at O'Keefe's Hotel in deep converse with Joe Ringcross, and it seemed to him that Condie's old self-confidence had returned. And finally one day, just after a mail steamer had passed through southwards from China, he met him in such a state of elation that he felt something extraordinary must have happened. And it certainly had. For Condie haled him willy-nilly into the Port Kennedy Hotel that happened to be near-by, and having obtained a lime juice cordial for our young friend and a two-finger whisky for himself, he put his hand on Reginald's shoulder, and said in tones of triumph, "Rumfy, old chap, *I've won!*"

Rumfy's eyebrows travelled up his forehead amidst an astonished silence, while he cogitated hopelessly on how a man could win a race to New Guinea without going there. Then the only possible solution occurred to him, and he said in alarm, "What, has Mr Calvert been shipwrecked?"

Condie shook his head impatiently. "No, *no*," he said. "No fairy godmother business. Just plain straightforward journalism. My account of my arrival in New Guinea has gone south by that steamer to-day."

"But you've never *been* there," protested Rumfy, utterly bewildered.

"Well, of course, I haven't *been* there," admitted Condie, "but that's not the point. The point is that I've been able to send to my paper a detailed account of my trip across and arrival at Port Moresby: description of the schooner I chartered (I used Bully Colson's *Lorna*); our hearty send-off from Thursday Island (with a bit of gammon about the local popularity of the 'Outlook'); description of the islands *en route*, first sight of New Guinea; arrival at Port Moresby; first impressions; flora, fauna, giant butterflies (a good touch, those butterflies); and finishing up with a statement of my proposed movements when I've fixed up with the native chiefs. And all so carefully put together that Burton himself couldn't pick a hole in it. And I get it in weeks before Calvert's can possibly get there.

"I tell you, Rumfy, what that fellow Joe Ringcross doesn't know about Torres Straits and New Guinea isn't worth knowing. He's saved my journalistic career."

"But you're not going to send that to your paper," protested Rumfy incredulously.

"You bet I am," replied Condie very emphatically. "It's

gone. You don't imagine that I'm going to let a youngster like Calvert get ahead of me."

"But it's all lies!"

"How can it be all lies if Burton couldn't find a flaw in it? Of course I wasn't there; but that's just what you might call journalistic licence. All the rest is all right. Journalism as a creative art—that's what it is."

Poor Rumfy was so dumfounded at the brazenness of it all that he could only stare dumbly at Condie, while his mind brooded on the strangeness of this outer world into which he had adventured. Then he remembered Condie's bets.

"And what about your bets?" he asked. "You'll surely have to own up to those fellows, anyway."

"Oh, no," returned Condie firmly. "I've got to play the game, Rumfy. I couldn't let my paper down like that. Those bets stand. Besides, mind you, they're good anyway. I didn't say anything about my getting to New Guinea first, because I wanted the benefit of the race back. What I bet was that my account would get published first. Well—it will."

Rumfy scratched his head in perplexity. "Well," he said finally, "it seems a funny game. I didn't know you could do things like that."

The shrewd-faced bush-whacker-journalist put his hand once more on his companion's shoulder, and said, "Rumfy, old chap, do you remember what the name of Calvert's schooner was?"

"*Root Hog or Die*," returned Rumfy absently.

"Well," replied Condie, "I've rooted. That's all."

III. A DEAL IN WRECKS.

Rumfy was seated at breakfast in the dining-room of O'Keefe's Hotel, engaged in what, to frequenters of that establishment, was the equivalent of reading the morning paper (of which there was none). That is to say, he was talking to Mrs O'Keefe. What that lady, by the end of a day, had not collected in the way of local news was not worth bothering about.

"I hear you've finished your job down at the store," she was saying tentatively.

"Why, yes," replied Rumfy regretfully. "That's over—until next *Siam*, anyway."

"You'd better go along and see the auction sale this afternoon," suggested Mrs O'Keefe. "That'll be something new to you, I expect, and help pass the time."

"An auction sale? What are they selling?"

"A wreck."

"A wreck?" Rumfy echoed, much intrigued. "But whatever do people do with wrecks?"

"Skin 'em," replied Mrs O'Keefe.

"*Eh?*" he exclaimed, and was about to ask for an explanation when an interruption occurred.

A new-comer had entered the room, and was standing by Mrs O'Keefe—a disreputable, unshaven, dirtily-clad, dissolute-looking fellow, such as one would expect to see promptly thrown out of any establishment seeking respectable patronage. But this one was not thrown out, for like the *Siam*, and M'Nab, and Fogarty, he was an institution. He was Jopkin, the bellman.

Somewhere past middle age, Jopkin's attitude towards life was inspired by a strong predilection for alcohol and an equally strong antipathy for work. He had maintained this attitude unwaveringly for many years, and, in the normal course, should long ere this have become a hopeless derelict, whereas, in fact, he was not entirely derelict and certainly far from hopeless, for he was always sanguine of being able to raise a drink, and his hopes were frequently realised. Lazy though he was, some tenacious remnant of intelligence seemed to have shown him the wisdom of having a definite occupation, and to have found him the very inexacting one of town crier, while something cheerfully and appealingly human about him secured for him tolerance and patronage.

"'Morn', Mrs O'Keefe," he said, with an amiable but slightly uncertain smile.

Mrs O'Keefe, who was a six-foot Tipperary woman, stood with her arms akimbo looking down at him with a speculative smile.

"Good-morning, Jopkin," she said; "and what brings you into my dining-room, please?"

"Somebody's pinched me bell," replied Jopkin, still smiling tentatively. Next to his clothes and his thirst, Jopkin's most treasured, and perhaps indeed his only, possession was a brass handbell with which he plied his trade; and it appeared that while he was resting a bit on the beach yesterday afternoon after crying the *Siam's* sailing hour ("Sleeping, you mean," corrected Mrs O'Keefe), some of the boys had sneaked it for a lark. And now he had a wreck auction sale to call, and he hadn't got a bell to do it with, and—well, after a certain amount of beating about the bush, it transpired that what Jopkin was after was the loan of Mrs O'Keefe's dinner-bell. This evoked from that lady an eloquent and severely framed commentary on Jopkin's unbounded cheek; and having in view the Irishwoman's size and caustic manner, Rumfy felt uncomfortably awed. Jopkin, however, remained smilingly unperturbed, and the sound judgment of this attitude was very soon revealed by Mrs O'Keefe's going away to fetch the dinner-bell.

Distinctly impressed by the disreputable bellman's success,

Rumfy seized this opportunity to ask him a question.

"Jopkin," he said in a stage whisper, "what do people *do* with wrecks when they buy them?"

And Jopkin bent down to him and said in tones of tragic confidence, "Skin 'em!" And he mouthed the words with a grim relish that suggested that if ever *he* got a chance at one he would positively *flay* it.

"But how——?" began Rumfy. And then Mrs O'Keefe came back with the bell and handed it to Jopkin, following which she hustled him out of the house and then proceeded to go about her own work, and our friend's opportunity was gone.

Rumfy sat and cogitated for a time as to how one should best proceed about looking for a job in a township in which practically all the business, both wholesale and retail, as well as the banking and shipping, appeared to be controlled by the one company that had just discharged him. The outcome of these deliberations was that he strolled in a leisurely manner along to the little knoll that dominated the western end of the water-front, on which was situated the Residency, with, clustering near it, the few other administrative buildings that the little settlement boasted; and here he called on the Government Resident, the Police Magistrate, the Land Commissioner, the Shipping-Master, the Postmaster, the Immigration Commissioner, and the Sub-Collector of Customs, and informed them all that he had recently arrived at the island for a purpose that had failed to materialise, and that he was a man of limited means but unlimited willingness, and was looking for a job. You might imagine from this a fairly busy morning; but as all these important offices were vested in only two officials, his mission was completed in a relatively short time. The only immediate benefit he gleaned from it, however, was the suggestion that he should go to the auction sale that afternoon; because not only most of the island's little community was likely to be there, but also any of the pearl-shellers who happened to be in from the fisheries. The Shipping-Master even developed this idea to the extent of suggesting that, as his late employer, Mr Burton, was conducting the auction, he would, if Rumfy asked him, doubtless be willing to put in a word for him to the assembly before the proceedings closed. This struck our friend as such an excellent proposal that he immediately hastened off to John Bruce & Co.'s 'store,' and submitted the request to Mr Burton, who readily promised to give effect to it.

With the rest of the morning to kill, Rumfy then wandered along the edge of the beach till he came to the jetty, and noticing a small sailing craft moored alongside, he sauntered out to inspect it. He knew

enough by this time to recognise the boat at once as a pearling lugger, and, in fact, a brand-new one. He noticed that she was slightly larger than the few older ones that he had seen, and that she was named the *Optimist;* and he was practising the little nautical knowledge that he had gleaned on board the *Siam* in studying her main features and putting names to them when he heard a voice at his side remark, "Pretty fine-fella lugger, eh?"

Rumfy turned round and saw a big Kanaka, or South Sea Island native, clad in the customary trousers and singlet that white propriety prescribed as the irreducible minimum. (According to Condie, trousers, a shirt, and a monumental thirst were the three attributes by which you might recognise the workings of civilisation on the simple native.) But while this man had the light brown skin and regular features of the Polynesian, he had an extraordinarily small mouth that looked to be all on one side. Closer observation showed a scar stretching from the left-hand side of it as if the mouth had once been slit open there; and the impression given was, that whoever had dressed this wound had sewn up the best part of an inch too much, leaving this burly native with a little simpering mouth that seemed to have wandered off to the right of its usual position. However, as Rumfy happened to be standing on the Kanaka's right, it had at the time the rather courteous appearance of reaching round its owner's face to speak to him.

"Yes, she's a smart-looking lugger all right," assented Rumfy, not intending to display ignorance. "Who does she belong to?"

"Me," said the native proudly.

"Yours, eh?" said Rumfy, much impressed. "Where did you get her?"

The Kanaka, evidently feeling greatly encouraged, said that he had just sailed her up from Cooktown, and that he was taking her out to the fisheries in a day or two; and, having found that he had a sympathetic and unsophisticated listener, he went on to tell tales about the pearl-fisheries and his own wonderful doings there, drawing liberally on his imagination whenever the truth seemed too dull, and finally took him aboard and showed him the diving-pump and gear, and all there was to be seen on the little ship. By that time their relations had reached a most cordial footing — on Rumfy's part because the experience had aroused his interest and thrilled his romantic susceptibilities, and on the native's because he had managed to work off a lot of extravagant yarns about himself without once having been hauled up for lying.

When at last they stood on the jetty the ringing of a bell was heard from the beach, followed by the voice of Jopkin

announcing that at three o'clock P.M. would be sold by auction an iron barque stranded on Goldie Reef, "as she lies, with all her equipment except boats." A query thereat revived itself in Rumfy's mind, and, turning to his new acquaintance, he said—

"Billy"—that was the name to which the Kanaka had owned—"did you ever skin a wreck?"

"You bet I skin him wreck!" replied Billy, with enthusiasm. "By Golly! s'pose you come longa me in this lugger we skin that wreck all right, eh?"

"You bet!" echoed Rumfy, with somewhat doubtful bravado. And recognising that after that he could not go and give himself away by asking how it was done, he said good-bye to Billy and walked thoughtfully back to the hotel.

As he passed through the bar-room he noticed the bellman trying to coax Clara, the barmaid, into giving him a drink on credit. "But I bin callin' an auction this mornin', Clara," he was protesting. "I'll have some money comin' to me 's afternoon." But Clara was inexorable. Mrs O'Keefe's instructions were to serve no drinks to him except against cash; so that was all there was about it. Whereat Jopkin turned away shaking his head dejectedly.

And then Rumfy witnessed an amazing thing. A happy smile suddenly broke out on Jopkin's countenance, and, after a furtive glance at the inner door, he swung Mrs O'Keefe's dinner-bell on to the bar, and said—

"Well, look 'ere, Clara; if I leave yer me bell until I get the money, will that be all right?"

Clara looked at the bell, and, after considering a moment, decided that it would, and accordingly served him with a beer. Rumfy stood aghast with staring eyes; Jopkin stood triumphant, and gulped the beer luxuriously. Then he placed the empty glass on the bar and wiped his lips.

"Pretty good beer?" remarked Clara, smiling.

Jopkin nodded. "And that's a pretty good bell, eh, Clara?"

Clara glanced casually at the bell and agreed that it looked all right.

"Worth at least *two* beers," stated Jopkin emphatically.

Clara laughed and said, "All right, Jopkin; I'll give you another one," and proceeded to do so. And Jopkin, having imbibed this second one with equal gusto, said good-bye to the girl and went away, grinning furtively. When Mrs O'Keefe came in a few minutes later to speak to Clara, and remarked pleasantly, "I'm glad to see that Jopkin has returned my bell," Clara stared at the bell in sudden horror as if it had been a ghost, and Rumfy felt like a novice who is waiting for a quarrying blast to explode. But to his renewed astonishment, the only explosion that occurred when Mrs O'Keefe discovered the situation was

that she burst out laughing; and, after chaffing Clara with not recognising their own bell, she stated that the joke was well worth two beers, and proceeded, with her retrieved property, to ring her patrons in to dinner.

The auction sale was to take place at three o'clock, but owing to the fact that it was to be conducted by Mr Burton, Rumfy jumped to the conclusion that it would be held at the store; whereas in those days auctions and all other public gatherings took place in the police court, as being the only place of assembly they had. So it transpired that, by the time he had been to the store and discovered his error and then walked on to the Court-house, which was near the Residency, it was past three o'clock, and the sale was already in progress.

Although locally dignified by the name of 'the Court-house,' the police court actually was only half of a house, the other half being taken up by the Shipping Office, the Customs, the Immigration Office, and the Post Office. To be brutally explicit, the whole building—which, like the rest of the settlement, was of weather-board and corrugated-iron—was divided into two rooms, one of which was the Court-room, while the other was everything else we have mentioned. On entering the room Rumfy was seized with an unexpected nervousness. He had never been in a police court before, nor at an auction sale, and this place held for him the awesomeness of both. Facing him at the far end of the room was Mr Burton of the fierce black beard, standing at the magistrate's bench with a little mallet in his hand, and saying, "Twelve pounds. Only twelve pounds is offered for a magnificent iron barque with a full cargo of coal, all in excellent condition except that she is wrecked. Is there no advance on twelve pounds?" On the seats in the body of the Court, with their backs to Rumfy, lounged a little group of men, in a variety of informal but doubtless comfortable attitudes. These were the leading lights of the business community and the local pearl-shelling industry, and Rumfy was just noticing amongst them O'Keefe, Jim Dryneck, Bully Colson, and others whom he had met, when he found Mr Burton's eyes upon him. He accordingly saluted his late employer with a respectful nod. Then, as Mr Burton merely raised his eyebrows as if in doubt of his identity, he nodded again, with more emphasis. But still he was surprised to see that Mr Burton, normally a courteous man, took no notice whatever of his greeting, but simply carried on with his auction.

"Thirteen pounds," he said, looking around the assembly. "Is there any advance on thirteen pounds?"

Several of the men turned round and looked at Rumfy,

and Jim Dryneck, addressing the auctioneer, said: "Look here, Burton, isn't this young feller in your employ? I suppose you're not bidding for this excellent iron barque yourself?"

Whereat Mr Burton became very annoyed, and his black beard looked fiercer than ever, and he stated very emphatically that he certainly was *not* bidding for the vessel, and he would thank the bidders not to make libellous suggestions. He then added, in a calmer voice, that the young man in question had left his employ yesterday, and that anything he did henceforward was on his own responsibility; but he would take that opportunity of saying that Mr Pott was seeking permanent employment, and that he could recommend him as willing, energetic, and conscientious—and it looked as if he was also very enterprising. Whereupon Jim Dryneck laughed, and said: "All right, Ted; I'll go fourteen."

So Mr Burton, somewhat appeased, raised his little mallet and said, "Fourteen. Going at fourteen," and, happening to catch Rumfy's eye, looked defiantly at him. Rumfy, feeling full of gratitude for his recommendation, took this opportunity to nod his eager thanks; at which Mr Burton, generous spirit that he was, looked quite annoyed, and then, shrugging his shoulders, said, "Fifteen pounds are bid. Is there any advance on fifteen pounds?"

The whole assembly turned round this time, and Jim Dryneck swore, and a few others laughed. Some one said, "Better look out, Jim; he's a dark horse." And Jim said irritably, "A dark *ass*, if you ask me." And somebody else said, "That's a fact, Jim; a chap like that's just as likely to run you up to fifty. Better let him have it." And still another voice urged, "Yes, let him have it and see what happens. Don't go and spoil a good lark, Jim." And finally, above the hubbub, the impatient voice of the auctioneer rang out, "Is there no advance on fifteen pounds, gentlemen? Going at fifteen pounds. Going—going——" Knock! went the little mallet. "The buyer is Mr Rumfy Pott," and he nodded to Rumfy grimly, as who would say, "You've *bought* it all right, my friend!"

When Rumfy heard himself actually announced as the purchaser of a real ship with a full cargo of coal, he was aghast with astonishment and alarm, and wondered why on earth Mr Burton should have picked on *him*. Then, as he realised that the price was only fifteen pounds, alarm was superseded by a thrill of adventure. And finally, when he saw the whole assembly looking at him with amused and expectant smiles, some reckless imp of resistance, planted in him perhaps by Fogarty and Captain M'Nab, and given voice unquestionably by Condie, whispered to him provocatively, "Root, hog, or

die!" So, pulling himself together and assuming all the bravado he could muster, he sauntered up to Mr Burton and asked him when he would be prepared to make delivery.

Mr Burton this time smiled quite pleasantly. "You can have the captain's note of sale and his bearings to show her position as soon as you pay me fifteen pounds," he said. Then a bantering voice from amongst the crowd called, "What are you going to do with her, Pott?"

Rumfy looked round with his best attempt at an air of casual dignity, and said melodramatically, "*Skin* her!"

This was greeted with a laugh and a shout from somewhere of "Good for Rumfipott!" followed, however, by the cold practical voice of Jim Dryneck inquiring, "What with?"

This was rather a poser, but the position was saved by Mr Burton breaking in with, "That's so; where are you going to get a boat?"

Rumfy felt greatly relieved, and beaming with regained confidence, said, "Oh, that'll be all right. I have a friend with a lugger down at the jetty, and he's already offered to take me out and help me skin her."

At this Jim Dryneck thrust forward a face full of grim amazement, and said, "*Eh?* And what's the name of this friend of yours?"

"Billy."

"Billy *Smallmouth?*" demanded the other expectantly.

"Yes." Rumfy nodded brightly as he remembered the diver's little mouth reaching round his face to speak to him. "Yes, that's it."

To his astonishment this statement was greeted with a roar of delight from all present, in which even Jim Dryneck joined, while thighs were smacked and remarks such as, "Gosh, this boy's a knock-out!" were uttered between hilarious gasps for breath. At last Jim Dryneck restrained himself and said, smiling drily—

"I'm afraid you've hung your horseshoe over the wrong door, old chap. That lugger belongs to *me*, and Billy Smallmouth is one of my divers."

This announcement, which was followed by a sudden expectant silence, proved too much for Rumfy's composure. He felt as if fortune had basely tricked him, as if Condie's brave maxim of "Root, hog, or die!" had let him down at his very first attempt to practise it, and all his bravado collapsed and left him stammering there in the midst of this derisive gathering of men, unable to utter a coherent word.

Then a voice in the crowd surprised him by calling, "Why don't you help the lad out, Jim? He's out of a job, and it's his ship, anyway. Lend him the *Optimist* and go whacks with him."

This brought a chorus of support, in the midst of which Jim said, "Can you *pay* for the ship, boy?"

"Oh, yes," said Rumfy, with a feeling of resuscitation.

"All right, then," said Jim. "We'll go whacks, if you like. You provide the wreck, and I'll contribute the lugger and crew and tucker; and you can start out with your friend Billy Smallmouth the day after to-morrow. Is that a do?"

"*Is that a do?*" Why, it was wonderful! It was better even than his brother's wild schemes, because it was true! Why, yes; yes, certainly, he told Jim. He would go and get the money now and pay for the wreck, and to-morrow he would stand by the lugger until they had her ready, or if there was anything Jim wanted him to do he had only to tell him and he would do it willingly; and his whole countenance beamed with delight and gratitude at Jim until even that seasoned campaigner felt somewhat abashed. However, even if Rumfy's ingenuous enthusiasm was a little disconcerting, there was no questioning its sincerity, and when he left the Court-house to fetch his money there was much kindly interest as well as amusement in the smiling regards that were directed after him.

Except to have his supper, Rumfy kept himself out of sight at the hotel that evening, for it seemed that every time a group of people caught sight of him somebody would tell afresh the story of that afternoon's auction, and he would become the cynosure of a number of hilarious eyes. So he took a walk after supper, and then packed up some things and went to bed. Next morning he took them aboard the *Optimist* and hung around her till noon, when they sailed across to Jim Dryneck's pearling station, where they took on provisions and completed their equipment for the trip. Rumfy slept aboard that night—or tried to sleep, but what with excitement and the stuffiness of the little cabin he was not very successful,—and next morning at the first glimmering of dawn they were off.

"Billy, how *do* you skin a wreck?" he had asked.

"Take um sails, ropes, blocks, stores—take um everything," explained Billy succinctly.

"And the cargo too?" asked Rumfy anxiously.

"Coal!" exclaimed Billy, and spat into the sea with such evident contempt that Rumfy did not care to pursue the inquiry. He concluded, however, on reflection, that the little *Optimist* would not be able to carry much coal after the sails and all the other things were aboard.

This little vessel was something over forty feet long, painted black, with two sturdy masts of equal height, a straight stem and a bowsprit, and carried only the customary pearling rig of two lug-sails and a jib. It was doubtless an economical rig, but above all it was the simplest conceivable, and eminently suited to these fleets of boats that had to be entrusted entirely to native divers and

crews. For in the event of a sudden squall, such as the Papuan Gulf was subject to, there were only two halyards to be cast loose—or slashed through with a knife if need be,—and the two lug-sails would come down with a run. There was no luxury such as a steering cockpit, and the little cabin, constructed to house the diver and his mate, was so stuffy that whenever possible its inmates slept on deck. Between the two masts there was a large cargo hatch exposing the hold for receiving the pearl-shell, and at one end of this was the diving-pump. Fo'c'sle worthy of the name there was none.

There was thus nothing about the *Optimist* to pamper any one. In the first place, their flour had, for some reason, been put in a kerosene tin; and, in case you do not know it, there are few things as aggressively permeating as kerosene. The result was that Rumfy's first bite of what Billy was pleased to call 'bread' (there was no baker on Thursday Island in those days) nearly made him violently ill, and he banned the use of flour on board thenceforward. But, happily, there were ship's biscuits. Then, towards the end of the first day he became painfully aware that he had feet. Eager to adapt himself, he had, on starting out, promptly copied Billy Smallmouth's example in going barefoot. But after the tropic sun had beamed upon them the whole morning, and after an assiduous deck-hand, swabbing down after lunch, had swilled a bucket of salt water over them, he felt as if he had a live coal tied on each instep, and for days the least touch upon them was agony. Another thing he became really aware of for the first time was his hips, which, in one's hours of repose, are outstandingly the most awkward part of one's anatomy to accommodate to a ship's deck or a hard bunk.

But who, bowling along for the first time over clear emerald seas before a brisk trade-wind, amongst glorious palm-clad isles, and in company with men of such picturesque calling and appellation as the diver, Billy Smallmouth, and his mate, Bobstay, could permit such trifles as these to mar his enjoyment? Rumfy revelled in every moment of it, and felt that, for the first time in his life, he was really living. And I am prepared to think he was right.

On the second evening they made Bramble Cay—a low bare sandbank with a large beacon on it,—and from there they set their course for Goldie Reef. Bramble Cay marks the fairway round the northern end of the Great Barrier Reef, and the eastern entrance to Torres Strait, and the reef they were seeking lay due east of it, right in the open water of the Papuan Gulf. So they sailed through the night with nothing to fear, and when the daylight, striking into the little cabin, brought Rumfy out on

deck, he saw a remarkable sight. Before them, not a mile away, was a long line of leaping, tumbling surf, and in the midst of it, as if heading right through it, was a large vessel in full sail. The sun, dead ahead of them beyond the reef, was already well up in a clear sky, and beneath it the lively sea, running from sapphire to emerald around the reef, was spread with a field of glittering silver, which, where it passed through the surf of the reef, gleamed in a tossing, snowy vortex of prisoned light. And just to the left of this field of living radiance, her hull dark with shadow, her white sails aglow with the sunlight through them, rode the ship.

In a little while they had passed the northern end of the reef; whereupon Billy, judging his angle carefully, put about, and, after skirting close along the edge of the breakers for some distance, finally brought to with all sails dropped close under the lee of the wreck. A little skilful manipulation brought the *Optimist* alongside, and in a few minutes they had her snugly moored under the big vessel's mizzen chains. Getting aboard was not as simple a matter for Rumfy as it seemed to be for Bobstay and the native crew; but before long they had found a rope ladder and dropped it over to him, and, with more effort than dignity, Rumfy then clambered aboard and took possession of his purchase. She was a fine vessel—if somewhat old—with a clear sweep of deck stretching away before him, and great tall masts with endless white sails towering up to heaven above him; and we should like to say that the little grocer felt like a man in a dream—but, as a matter of fact, what with the uneasy rolling of the ship, and the unsteadiness of his legs after two days on the tiny lugger, he felt as if he were drunk. He accordingly seated himself on the after hatch, while Billy Smallmouth busied himself with the commencement of his 'skinning' operations.

He had been allowed two extra hands for this purpose—that is to say, he had four islanders as a crew in addition to his mate, Bobstay. So leaving one of these in charge of the lugger, he sent Bobstay and the three others up into the fore rigging to start work on the sails, while he directed operations from below, and between whiles busied himself searching for other suitable loot on or below deck.

For a while Rumfy went forward to watch the men in the rigging, until a falling block smote the deck beside him, having missed him by about a foot. After that he retired aft again, and, at the suggestion of Billy, found himself occupation in freeing the binnacle and the ship's bell and getting them aboard the lugger. The bell had the vessel's name, *Romsdal*, on it, and he decided to keep it as a memento. Following that, he was able

to busy himself with the stores, the sail-locker, the fore-peak, and the lazaret. And so for three days they all worked steadily, Bobstay's gang furling and unbending the sails and unreeving the gear and lowering it all to the deck, while Billy and Rumfy, having finished work below, proceeded to make a careful selection of what they should take, for it was hardly to be expected that the little lugger would accommodate everything. Then came the laborious job of transferring it aboard the lugger and stowing it—probably the hardest work of all,—until finally, with their hold crammed to the hatch with sails and ropes, their little cabin all lumbered up with groceries so that they could hardly enter it, their bows full of drums of paint, and even with rolls of sail lashed on deck, they stood ready to cast off on the homeward journey.

They stayed aboard long enough to take a final meal in the comparative comfort of the broad decks; but Billy would not let them linger over it more than was necessary, for since the previous day he had begun to get anxious about the condition of the ship. Her bows were hard on the reef, and evidently stove in below water, for there was a lot of water in the holds; but aft she was riding clear, so that she was continually working and straining in the swell, and Billy felt that the time was approaching when she would begin to break up. Nor was he far wrong, for when at last they cast off they could see places where her strakes were opening up, and where the water streamed out when the waves fell away from them.

And as he studied this phenomenon a thought came to Rumfy, and with the thought came indignation.

"Billy," he said, in a scandalised voice, "that barque is not iron."

"That no b'long barque," commented Billy, smiling.

"What do you mean?" demanded Rumfy in alarm.

"Barque no got um squares'ls aft. That b'long *ship*."

To Rumfy, entirely unversed in sailing-ship lore, this statement was entirely cryptic. To him 'ship' simply meant a 'vessel'; and it took a considerable amount of resourceful explanation from Billy to make the strict nautical significance of the term clear to him and to demonstrate in what way a 'ship' differed from a 'barque.' But when he had achieved this elucidation it was manifest to Rumfy that what they had found—and 'skinned'—was a wooden ship, whereas what he had bought was an iron barque. It was very baffling and disconcerting. Rumfy consulted his bill of sale and the Captain's bearings once more, but there was no mistake about it. The vessel was clearly shown as lying on Goldie Reef, and Billy gave his assurance that that was where they had been. So the conclusion they jointly arrived

at, with much indignant ire, was that the Captain had deliberately swindled them; and with equal unanimity they agreed that Mr Burton should be told about it, for obviously he had been swindled too.

So when at last they got back to the island they berthed the *Optimist* alongside the jetty, and our two friends, full of righteous dudgeon, proceeded together to the store and asked to see Mr Burton. Mr Burton had a clerk with him at the time, but he greeted them genially and invited them into his office.

"Well, did you skin her all right?" he asked cheerfully.

"We did," replied Rumfy; then added in portentous tones, "May we speak to you privately?"

Mr Burton evinced some surprise, but at once dismissed the clerk.

"There's been some funny business about that wreck of mine," resumed Rumfy; then, in a voice full of significance, "Do you think that Captain was honest?"

"Oh, as honest as the average skipper that plants his ship, I suppose," said Mr Burton. "Why?"

"Didn't you sell me an iron barque?"

Mr Burton considered a moment. "Yes," he said finally. "Yours was the iron barque."

"Well," announced Rumfy, in tones of triumphant denunciation, "it was *not* an iron barque; it was——"

But here a sudden light seemed to dawn on Mr Burton. "Wait a minute!" he commanded, raising his hand. "Go easy a bit." Then, having got the situation in hand, he fixed Rumfy sternly with his eye, and said, "Do you know that I am a J.P.?"

Rumfy didn't.

"Well, I am. And in case you don't know what it means, it is the same as a police magistrate, with power to put people under arrest."

Rumfy, quite unaccountably, felt an unpleasant chill down his spine.

"Well, if you've got that clear," continued Mr Burton, "I will tell you something.

"A couple of days after you left here to skin your barque, another shipwrecked crew came in on one of Hatchett's luggers that had picked them up. The Captain announced that he had left his vessel—a full-rigged wooden ship" (Mr Burton looked hard at Rumfy)—"aground on Goldie Reef. I auctioned her, and Hatchett bought her. He's gone out to her now in the *Nancy Lee*. I *hope*" (another stern look) "he will find she has not been tampered with, because if she has it might be a *very* serious matter."

At this juncture Rumfy felt two distinct tugs at the tail of his coat.

"Her name," added Mr Burton thoughtfully, "let's see—was the *Romsdal*."

Rumfy gave a start as he recognised the name that was on his ship's bell.

"Well, then," he blurted out impetuously, "what's happened to my——"

But at this moment a powerful grasp seized the tail of his coat and drew him abruptly backwards until he was out of Mr Burton's office. As the door closed upon him the grip relaxed, whereupon Rumfy swung round indignantly upon Billy, and demanded to know what the dickens he thought he was doing.

"You want go lock-up?" asked Billy, equally indignant.

"Certainly not. Why should I go to the lock-up?"

"You bin skin um Mr Hatchett's wreck. Very angry man, Mr Hatchett; any fella call him 'Battleaxe.' When he savvy you skin his wreck he dam sure send you lock-up."

"But where's *my* wreck, then?" demanded Rumfy plaintively.

Billy shook his head sadly. "Iron," he said disparagingly. "Water come in, maybe sink. Fall off um reef go way down bottom."

"Is that really possible?" asked Rumfy, incredulous.

"You bet. All same tin can," affirmed Billy contemptuously.

"Well, then, what should we do now?" queried Rumfy, feeling broken-spirited.

"Take him lugger away from jetty plenty dam quick," replied the practical Billy.

So they hurried back to the lugger and cast off and up sail, and were just selecting an anchorage in the harbour when Billy caught sight of the harbour police gig paddling aimlessly in their direction.

"H'm. I think outside more better," he remarked, and promptly put the *Optimist* about.

So they headed once more for the open water, while Rumfy lay on deck in a state of utter dejection, and pondered on the unfairness of fate.

Billy's simple mentality came to the fore again with the recommendation that they should seek out the pearling fleet and put the whole matter before Mr Jim. Mr Jim, Billy said, was 'plenty dam clever'; and as he seemed convinced of his master's ability to settle absolutely any problem that came along, his recommendation was adopted.

So Billy laid a course in the direction in which he expected to find the fleet; but as the day was drawing to a close, and as they had already been out for over a week without putting foot ashore for more than a troublous half-hour, they anchored under the peaceful lee of an island, and treated themselves to a little comfort and leisure. Then, next morning, they started off again, but to Billy's surprise, when they reached the patch that the fleets had been working, there was not a ship there. However, Billy had a vague notion that there was another spot that there had been some talk of trying when this one was played out, so he carried on in that

direction, until at last Bobstay, who had climbed a mast, announced that he could see some boats several miles away to the eastward.

They were skirting a long reef that lay across their course, and the boats Bobstay had seen were away on the far side of this; so they continued to hug the reef until they came to a narrow channel passing diagonally through it, which they accordingly took. They now found themselves in a strangely quiet expanse of water, across which they sailed in an easterly direction until, after some two or three miles, they came to another reef. So they followed this north in search of an opening, and carried on patiently for some miles, with the pearling luggers now clearly visible some distance away on the far side. Then, to their consternation, the reef headed them back to the west and then to the south. And after sailing steadily southward for several miles they were headed to the east and then to the north, until they had sailed a complete circle. Whereupon Bobstay said in great agitation: "By golly! by golly! devil-devil have catch um!" and Billy Smallmouth said a whole lot of things that I simply cannot repeat.

At this point Rumfy thought it desirable to bring a white man's calmness and resource to the rescue, so he said quite casually: "We'd better just go back the way we came in." He was certainly not prepared for the withering look that Billy cast at him; but all that the Kanaka said was: "All right; you take um tiller."

So Rumfy, having received several lessons on the way out to the wreck and back, took the tiller and sailed her back to the western side of the reef. And for at least a couple of hours they sailed up and down that pestilential bank of coral without being able to detect the least sign of the channel through which they had come in. In other words, they had got themselves trapped in a great circle of reef, the entrance to which appeared in some miraculous manner to have closed itself up. Rumfy shook his head hopelessly and handed the tiller back to Billy, with the somewhat feeble pleasantry that he thought Bobstay's devil-devil must have swallowed it. Whereat Billy assumed a superior smile, and, with the condescension of a master instructing the ignorant, said: "Tide go down. Bime-by tide come up we find um all right." And with that he headed her back across this vast lagoon to the eastern—which is to say, the windward—side, and brought her to anchor close under the lee of the reef.

Within a couple of minutes after the anchor dropped, Bobstay and the four deck-hands had emerged from their clothes in their full native blackness, and slid into the sea with the smooth gliding plunges of a troop of seals. And there they disported themselves like seals or porpoises, to the fascinated

wonderment of the city-bred white man, spending nearly as much of the time under water as on the surface, diving from one side of the ship to the other, and at times disappearing into the depths for so long that Rumfy began to picture their having been drawn into some cavernous lair by an octopus, who was now busy devouring them.

Then suddenly Bobstay's head and shoulders broke the surface close alongside, his white teeth gleaming in a triumphant smile, and his right hand holding aloft a flat greenish-brown disc about seven inches in diameter which, after a couple of flourishes, he tossed to Billy Smallmouth on the lugger. Billy pounced upon it excitedly, and, after a casual glance, began shooting questions at Bobstay—where did he get it? were there many? which way were they lying?—and on hearing his replies, "Plenty—any plenty. Out there," he immediately called to all the others to return on board, and proceeded to clear the cargo hatch. There was a pile of the *Romsdal's* sails on the hatch which were now taken off and thrown on the forward deck. Then the hatches were removed, revealing the hold crammed to the combings with canvas and gear. For a moment Billy looked at this in hesitation. Then he turned to Rumfy and said, with a finality to which there seemed no appeal, "Me plenty dam sorry must throw away your things."

Rumfy stared at him aghast. "Why?" he demanded finally.

"Have got shell — *plenty* shell," said Billy.

"Yes, well suppose there are," protested Rumfy, "you don't want to go and chuck away my good sails just for a lot of shells, do you?" And, moved by the obvious absurdity of this idea, he added in a superior tone: "There's plenty of shells in the sea, you know, but you don't get a wreck every day. Those sails are valuable."

This time it was the Kanaka that stood aghast. The idea that any one could solemnly presume to compare the value of old sails with pearl-shell left him, for a few moments, absolutely speechless. Then, in a sudden rush of excited language, preluded by an expletive so colourful that we shall not repeat it, he said: "You savvy what price shell? Maybe hundred-twenty pound ton. How much you pay him wreck? Maybe not twenty pounds. *Fifteen* pounds, eh?"—another salvo of verbal colour-splashes, concluding with the scornful *coup-de-grâce*—"and ship and cargo you leave um on reef!"

Billy turned away and at once set the men to work clearing the hold, while Rumfy, to whom the force of the Kanaka's arguments had been only too clear, sat all a-droop with a resignation so complete that, if they had come and gathered him up with a view to dumping him overside with his sails, it is doubtful whether he would even have felt interested enough

to protest. One concession, however, Billy did make to his feelings. Opposite to where they were lying there was a backward curve in the line of the reef that formed a little bay, with a 'niggerhead,' or knoll of coral, at one end that could serve as a land-mark. So Billy adopted this bay as his cache, and moved the lugger in there. Then the work of vandalism began.

Accompanied by a cheery—I mean, an utterly wanton—'yo-heave-ho,' or its native equivalent, sail after sail was sent splashing overside. Those that were rolled remained floating on the surface because of the amount of air in them; but most had been folded square for easier stowage, and Billy had these lashed tightly with some of Rumfy's valuable running-gear, and in this way they sank like stones as soon as the water got into them. And as sail after sail vanished into the green depths, Rumfy quoted to himself in bitter irony Condie's maxim: "Root, hog, or die!" A fat lot of good *him* rooting. Others could do it—yes; but not Reginald Humphrey. All it did for him was to turn him out on the high seas as a fugitive from Battle-axe and the law, with his fifteen pounds—practically the 'Last of the Mohicans'—thoroughly up the spout, or, rather, down the drain. Hard luck? No! It was the greatest joke on earth! A side-splitter! He was enjoying it like anything! Gosh! he would help them!—and he dashed down into the cabin and returned in a moment with his arms full, and any sails that remained floating he proceeded to pelt violently with large tins of Bullchin's Best Australian Pressed Beef, uttering yells of eldritch triumph each time he scored a hit.

But he did not keep that up for long. Billy Smallmouth descended upon him with a face on which amazement and outrage crowded each other for front place, and enjoined him in florid phrases to desist. How the blankety-blank could he throw away blankety good-fella food, he demanded indignantly. To which Rumfy hotly retorted, but, holy crikey! wasn't Billy chucking away his equally good-fella sails?

Oh, *sails!* retorted Billy, SAILS! What did *sails* matter? Only ships could use sails. But *every* fella needed *food*; you couldn't throw food away.

So there you were. It was just the same old story. If any other chap did a thing it was all quite O.K.; but the moment he, Rumfy, did it, it was a blistering scandal. And the fact that it was all his own property didn't make a bit of difference. Well, he gave it up. What was the use of butting against fate (by which he really meant Billy)? Fate had got the half-Nelson on him, anyway. Let them bally well do what they liked.

So he sat down on the cabin-top with his chin on his hands, and watched the band of black

vandals throw away the things 'that didn't matter.' It was only his sails—only the last remnant of his patrimony! Who cared? Well, Billy was very thorough about it, anyway; and when all the sails were overside the few that persisted in floating were weighted at one end with such valueless articles as the *Romsdal's* bell (his much-prized memento!), the two heavy iron magnets off the binnacle, and, finally, the binnacle itself (but with the compass removed from it). Whereupon they were at last persuaded to sink; after which Billy turned and regarded his empty hold and his disencumbered diving-pump with the frank pride of a man who has done something creditable. And he proceeded to announce that there would be no more work that day, and that he would start diving to-morrow morning.

Next morning the crew breakfasted early, and then Billy was helped into his diving kit. Bobstay hung a short wooden ladder overside—two of the crew having meantime started turning the diving-pump down in the hold,—and without further ado the awesome monster that was Billy Smallmouth stepped backwards over the gunnel, descended by the ladder into the water, and subsided into the depths; and Rumfy anxiously watched him fade and fade, until nothing was left to see except the rope and a rubber tube vanishing vaguely down into the green and a little stream of bubbles rising up from it.

Bobstay's job now evidently was to take charge of the pipe and life-line, and he accordingly squatted by the gunnel holding these where they ran overside, and paying out slack when needed. Very soon Rumfy noticed the line jerking, whereupon Bobstay gave an order, and a flat canvas bag fitted with sinkers was brought and lowered overside on a line. The stream of bubbles then began to move about around the boat. Then after a time there were more jerks, and the canvas bag was promptly hauled up, and found to contain ten or twelve of the large flat objects that Rumfy now knew to be pearl-shell. Down went the bag again. Then the rising column of bubbles began to move away from the boat, and there were some more jerks on the rope, following which Bobstay gave the order to haul up anchor. A feeling of uneasiness assailed Rumfy. If they were going away, what about Billy? he thought. However, no one seemed concerned about Billy, who, by the bubbles, was moving away towards the centre of the circle of reef. Then they began to overtake him, and Rumfy realised that the lugger was drifting with the breeze, and that Billy, down below, was moving along with it. Every now and then the bag was hauled up full of shell. Then, when they had drifted some distance from the reef, there were some more jerks on

the life-line which produced an excited exclamation from Bobstay, and over went the anchor once more.

"What's the matter?" asked Rumfy anxiously.

"No matter anything," replied Bobstay cheerfully; "plenty shell."

And there evidently was, for Billy worked that patch for quite a long while, sending up bag after bag full of shell before he signalled to weigh anchor again. And this time, sensing what would happen, they only tripped it up a few feet; and, sure enough, before long came the signal from Billy to drop it once more. And the column of bubbles moved continually round and about the ship, and bag after bag of shell was hauled up.

Suddenly one of the crew called to Bobstay and pointed out to the eastward, and looking round they beheld on the sparkling green waters beyond the surf of the reef a smart white schooner approaching them. The natives all seemed to recognise the boat at once and to have much pleasure in doing so, and the mystic word '*Shlanty*' was frequently repeated.

"What's '*Shlanty*' mean, Bobstay?" asked Rumfy, who, under the stimulus of watching Billy's diving and its fruitful results, had regained an interest in life.

"Mr Jim," replied Bobstay, exposing his fine set of teeth as he smiled.

So Rumfy made a mental note that *Shlanty* was the native name for Jim Dryneck, until the trend of subsequent remarks revealed it to him as the name of Jim's schooner.

Well, the *Shlanty* sailed as near to the reef as she dared, but could not get near enough to hail them, though from their signals it was clear that they had recognised the *Optimist*. Then, finding no opening, she turned north, and still finding none she turned west, and then south, and then east, and then north again, until, after a couple of hours' sailing, she was back where she started from. Then she anchored and put out a dinghy (the *Optimist* having none), and in this Jim, with two boys rowing, managed to pick a way through the reef, and in due course boarded the lugger. By this time Billy Smallmouth had returned from the depths for some food and a rest, and sat on deck, still in his ungainly kit, but with his helmet off.

"Hallo, Billy!" hailed Mr Jim. "Found some shell?"

I'm afraid Billy was short of descriptive adjectives, so that when he wanted to launch into superlatives his only recourse was to employ terms of emphasis of the type commonly described as 'lurid'; and that patch of shell appeared to be the most superlative thing he had ever come across.

"Well, that's first-rate," commented Mr Jim, who was evidently hardened to Billy's language. "I'll go and bring the other luggers along, because

they're not getting much where they are just now." Then, turning to Rumfy, he said, "Well, young feller, did you skin your wreck? Where's the loot?"

"Down there," replied Rumfy listlessly, pointing overside.

"Eh? What's this?" asked the astonished Jim, turning an inquiring look towards Billy.

The big Kanaka nodded. "Find plenty shell," he said; "no can use diving-pump. My have chuck away."

For some reason this seemed to strike Jim as amusing. In any case it aroused his interest, and gradually he elicited the whole story from them—how they had found a wreck on the reef at the spot indicated, skinned her, then discovered that she didn't answer the Captain's description, so, on returning to Thursday Island, had gone to register a protest with Mr Burton, who had told them that the wreck they had skinned belonged to 'Battle-axe,' and threatened them with arrest.

At this point the recital had to be suspended while Jim Dryneck smacked his thigh and lay back and roared with laughter, and patted Rumfy on the shoulder and told him almost incoherently that he was the dead finish, and then shook his head and laughed again. When he had recovered he assured them it was the best thing he had heard in years, and begged Rumfy to go on.

So Rumfy continued by relating how the police had begun to shadow them in the harbour, so that they had decided to clear out before they were caught red-handed, and bring the whole problem to him to solve. And in trying to rejoin the fleets they had got trapped in this lagoon, and then Bobstay had found pearl-shell there, so Billy Smallmouth had chucked all his sails and gear overboard to get at the pump and to make room for shell. So all that was left aboard now were the provisions and the drums of paint.

Here again the pearler was seized with an access of merriment, but he checked himself when Rumfy remarked that he hoped he would do well out of the pearling, but that as far as he, personally, was concerned he would be dead stony-broke.

"Cleaned you out, eh, that fifteen quid for the wreck?" asked Jim.

Rumfy admitted that, but for a few odd ones, it had.

"Well, I like your spirit, Rumfy, old chap," commented Jim; "and now I'll make you a proposition." And to Rumfy's utter amazement the pearl-fisher offered to buy the whole of Rumfy's 'skinnings,' where they lay, for fifteen pounds.

It took a little time to convince Rumfy of his seriousness, but as soon as he realised that Jim really meant it he accepted with wondering gratitude. The pearler then proceeded to elicit from Billy and Bobstay all the information he could get about the elusive entrance to the lagoon, the con-

sensus of opinion being that, owing to its oblique course through the reef, you could only see the channel during the high or rising tide, and that when the ebb set in it got hidden by rips. With this Jim left them, and was rowed back to his smart white schooner, which immediately set sail and slanted away gracefully to the eastward.

Next morning, not long after dawn, Jim's fleet of luggers were seen making their way round the reef with the *Shlanty* leading them; and by the time the luggers came up Jim had found the entrance and surveyed it in his dinghy, and was able to get all his boats in on the morning tide, the *Shlanty* coming in last, towed by the dinghy. Then, while the luggers proceeded across the lagoon to take up their stations to windward ready for pearling, Jim examined the entrance from the inside, and, finding it already almost impossible to recognise owing to the rips, buoyed it on both sides with life-buoys. Then he crossed to the *Optimist*, and sent an invitation to Rumfy to come and live aboard the *Shlanty* as his guest, and as soon as this transfer was effected he made Rumfy direct him to the spot where the *Romsdal's* gear was dumped, and anchored the schooner right in the mouth of the little bay. And having taken a trip in the dinghy to make sure that they had made no mistake in the spot, and having seen, through the limpid water, the mass of sails and gear carpeting the coral a couple of fathoms below them, they returned to the schooner, whereupon Jim disappeared into the cabin for a few minutes, and, on returning, handed Rumfy a small slip of paper on which were written and printed instructions to a certain firm in Sydney to pay Mr R. Pott the sum of fifteen pounds.

That marked the beginning of a period that to Rumfy was really like a dream. The beautiful schooner; the wide, sunlit, emerald seas; the long line of murmuring surf; the little fleet of black luggers, each continually hauling out of the depths little bags full of valuable shell; the fathomless blue sky over all; and, as his host, this strange, lean, lazy-looking man, to whom everything seemed humorous and everything seemed easy; and he himself, who a few short weeks ago had been serving in a Sydney grocer's shop—it seemed all too wonderful to be real.

Towards mid-day they sailed out to the midst of the fleet, and then visited all the luggers in the dinghy. Jim appeared a little disturbed when, during the afternoon, they saw a dark-hulled schooner approaching the lagoon from the westward. And the feeling of disturbance spread itself to Rumfy when he was informed that the schooner was no other than the *Nancy Lee* belonging to Mr 'Battleaxe' Hatchett.

"Trust old Tomahawk to come smelling around if you've got on to a good thing," growled

Dryneck; "and he's just caught the top of the flood tide, and with my buoys marking the fairway he simply can't miss it." And in his picturesque Australian phraseology he invoked various kinds of murrain upon the unconscious Mr Hatchett.

Just as he had foreseen, the party on the *Nancy Lee* quickly found the opening, and sailed boldly through it with shortened sail, and half an hour or so later they were dropping anchor close by the *Shlanty*. Very shortly afterwards a dinghy, very much down by the stern, conveyed Mr Hatchett across to the other schooner, on which Jim, sprawled lazily across the deck against the cabin top, lay watching his arrival. Mr Hatchett was a big man, with dark bushy hair and beard, and a somewhat blustering manner. In a community big enough to leave room for it he would probably have been pompous; but in the lively and blunt-spoken little circle of Thursday Island there certainly was not room, and the islanders' cautionary injunction to him had long ago been issued in their playful glorification of the homely 'hatchet' into the 'battleaxe.'

"Hullo, Battleaxe," said Jim casually from his reclining position as the newcomer stepped aboard; "having a nose round?"

"I've come to claim my gear from this young scallywag here," replied Battleaxe in a cavalier tone, jerking his head towards Rumfy; "or else to know why I shouldn't have him put under arrest."

"Here! here! Battleaxe!" protested Dryneck, raising a languid hand. "Your manners are rotten. Your gear's all here just waiting for you to take it away."

"Where?" demanded Hatchett, somewhat disturbed in his poise.

"Down below," replied Dryneck, stabbing a finger at the deck.

Battleaxe, vibrant with unbelief, strode to the open corner of the hatch and looked down. He saw nothing but a pile of pearl-shell, which was engaged in emitting its usual pungent salty odour.

"They tell me you're a wag, Dryneck," he said with austere sarcasm, "so I suppose this is one of the jokes."

"No joke at all," assured Jim, "only the view down there's rather obstructed by a heap of shell and some planking. But if you'll cock your eye over the stern you'll see it in all its naked beauty."

Battleaxe, now thoroughly suspicious of some hoax or other, went doubtfully to the end of the counter and looked over. The tide was flowing out, and the *Shlanty* now lay with her stern swung right into the little bay. And there, a couple of fathoms below him, dancing mockingly to and fro under the refraction of the little glassy wavelets on the surface, he saw

spread out on the coral a mass of sails and gear, with a glowing brass binnacle in its midst.

"What the hell is all that stuff doing down there?" he demanded, turning angrily to Dryneck.

"Waiting for *you*, dear," replied that gentleman sweetly.

At this point the mass of hair on Battleaxe's face began to work in such a turbulent manner that Rumfy was seized with the idea that the face was about to explode. However, this catastrophe was averted by a great effort of self-control on its owner's part, and a conversation then ensued in which Jim Dryneck assured Battleaxe that Rumfy, on finding that he had inadvertently skinned the wrong ship, had brought the gear out here in search of its rightful owner, intent on handing it back, and that, not knowing how long they might have to wait for him, they had pickled it in brine to make sure that it would keep. He further staunchly maintained that Battleaxe's courteous thanks were due to Rumfy for having stripped his wreck for him and delivered his salvage to a spot from which it would be much easier for him to collect it than off the spars of a ship. Unfortunately the courtesy thus delicately suggested was not forthcoming, but in the end an arrangement was graciously conceded by Dryneck whereby the two schooners would change positions so that Battleaxe might set to work to take delivery of his belongings.

This was promptly carried out, and Battleaxe immediately started his men at the work, sending swimming divers down with ropes to make fast to the gear, which was then hauled up, piece by piece, by a deck gang. In this way he got in a good hour's work before dusk, and when, after supper, he came across to the *Shlanty* for a smoke and a yarn at Jim's invitation, he was in quite an expansive mood, and disposed to be very pleased with life, or, at any rate, with Mr 'Battleaxe' Hatchett.

"Finish this little job by noon to-morrow," he said with a lordly wave of the hand. "Then I shall have to desert you for a while."

"What do you mean, 'for a while'?" asked Dryneck. "Aren't you going out to have a look at your fleet when you've unloaded that?"

"Well," replied Battleaxe in his most ponderous manner, "as a matter of fact I shall probably drop across to the fleet first"—Jim raised his eyebrows in surprise—"and give them the word to move across here. I think this is rather a good patch, Dryneck."

"Oho, so *that's* the lay, is it?" said Jim, nodding sagely. "'Nosing around' was the right label after all."

"My good fellow," protested Battleaxe somewhat haughtily, "there are no close preserves

on the pearling grounds, you know."

"Well, that's so all right," assented Jim, smiling thoughtfully; "but, you see, if it wasn't for this young chap Rumfy we shouldn't have found this place at all. So, by way of a vote of thanks to him, I'm charging an entrance fee of fifteen pounds to this lagoon for pearling fleets. Paid mine already, eh, Rumfy?"

"You bet," said Rumfy with an enthusiastic smile.

"Well, if you don't mind my saying so," remarked Battleaxe, "I never heard such damned nonsense in my life."

"Oh, but this is absolutely 'honest injun,'" said Jim, chuckling contentedly; "show him that order of mine, Rumfy."

Rumfy went below to get the order, during which time Battleaxe called for his dinghy. On Rumfy's return he glanced curiously at the order, following which he shrugged his shoulders and, as he loaded himself into his dinghy, said casually to Jim, "You're not seriously expecting to get mine, I hope?"

"Well, knowing you, Battleaxe," replied Jim, "I suppose I ought to regard my chances as pretty rotten; but, being an optimistic sort of cuss, I confess I'm still hoping."

"H'm. Well, anyway, that don't cost you anything," grunted Battleaxe. "Goodnight."

"Pleasant dreams," said Jim cheerfully, following which he gave some carefully detailed instructions to the *Shlanty's* trusty skipper, smoked a final pipe, and turned in.

All next morning Battleaxe's salvage gang worked like Trojans, and when Jim and Rumfy dropped across to the *Nancy Lee* about noon, there was not very much left to come up.

"Don't seem to rise to the idea of my fifteen pound entrance fee at all, does he?" commented Dryneck to Rumfy as they rowed back to the *Shlanty* following a little exchange of banter on that subject.

"An hour before high tide," predicted Rumfy gloomily, "he'll be sailing out of that fairway like driving down a street."

"H'm—p'r'aps," replied Dryneck enigmatically.

Nevertheless, nearly an hour and a half before high tide Battleaxe's crew were seen to be putting hatches on and swabbing down decks, and a few minutes later the creak of the halyards was heard.

"That settles *that*," thought Rumfy.

"Why, Battleaxe, you're not deserting us?" hailed Jim in apparent surprise.

Battleaxe expressed his regrets, but affirmed that he was.

"Then am I to keep all the provisions?" queried Dryneck gratefully. "Darned good of you, Battleaxe, old chap."

"Eh," said Battleaxe, "what provisions?" He hadn't been told of any provisions.

"Why," replied Jim, "out of the *Romsdal.*" The *Optimist's* cabin was full of them, and her bows were crammed with drums of paint. They'd be very useful to him indeed.

Oh, but he'd never heard about all these, protested Battleaxe. This was quite a misunderstanding. He'd certainly take them. Where was the *Optimist?*

Why, the *Optimist* was up at the end of the line, so if Battleaxe really wanted the stuff, Jim would come aboard and go with him. Which, taking his own good time, he did.

Well, the end of the line was quite a good way away, and when they got there they found that Jim had made a mistake, and that she was really at the end they had started from. So they sailed back, which was quite a good way too. And by the time they had done this, and transferred the provisions and the paint, the tide had turned and they were well into the ebb.

"Have you written me an order for that entrance fee?" asked Jim, as they parted.

"What do you take me for?" replied Battleaxe impolitely.

Jim shook his head despondently. "A hard case," he said sadly.

So Battleaxe sailed away; and Jim sat on the *Optimist* watching him with deep interest, while he waited for the *Shlanty's* dinghy to come and fetch him back. And the *Nancy Lee* reached the western side of the reef and sailed up and down it several times, and anchored and put out a dinghy, very much down by the stern, which careered around quite a lot, and was finally taken aboard again. And towards dusk, when Jim was back in the *Shlanty*, lying luxuriously against the cabin-top with a pipe in his mouth and a whisky by his side, the *Nancy Lee* arrived back and cast anchor close by him.

Then the voice of a very irate Battleaxe called out to him to know where the blank his blankety fairway-buoys were; to which Jim replied, where was his blankety entrance fee? And Battleaxe told him irritably not to be a silly goat; to which Jim replied that Battleaxe himself was the goat, if he couldn't see that he was losing more than the value of that entrance fee every hour that he lost in getting his fleet into the lagoon.

This statement produced noises from the *Nancy Lee* that were quite impossible to describe, much less to understand; following which a silence of well over an hour ensued, during which Jim and Rumfy ate a hearty and very sociable supper. And as they were lounging on deck afterwards the bow of the *Nancy's* dinghy poked out of the darkness, and Battleaxe, from the depths of its stern-sheets, handed up a white slip of paper, and very gruffly demanded of Jim that he should

pilot him out of the damned place at daylight to-morrow; and they would talk about this afternoon's bally foolishness on another occasion. To which Jim, having briefly scanned the slip of paper by the light of the cabin-hatch, and found it to be a cash-order on Sydney for fifteen pounds, replied that he would talk about this afternoon's foolishness just as much as Battleaxe liked, and probably a darned sight more, when he met some of the boys again. And Battleaxe muttered things quite enough to upset any ordinary dinghy, and disappeared into the night again.

And next morning at daybreak Jim, in the *Shlanty*, faithfully piloted the *Nancy Lee* to the entrance, right at the top of high tide. And there was the fairway, as Jim said, as large as Pitt Street—he couldn't understand why Battleaxe couldn't find it; whereat Battleaxe sailed through it in silence, but his beard was very turbulent again.

And Rumfy, as he lay that night in his bunk on the *Shlanty* with two orders for fifteen pounds each under his pillow, pondered on the relative merits of two maxims. "Root, hog, or die!" said the jostling world. "Conquer fortune with endurance," said the mild and patient Mr Simpson. And before he got to sleep, Rumfy decided that "Root, hog, or die!" was all right as a starter, but that "Conquer fortune with endurance" was the winner in the long-run.

(*To be continued.*)

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